Archbishop George Matulaitis

STASYS YLA

JURGIS MATULAITIS

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Main sources:

AJM — "Arkivyskupas Jurgis Matulevičius" — Marijampolė, Lithuania: The Marian Fathers' Press, 1933.

Diary — Ark. Jurgis Matulaitis-Matulevičius, Užrašai. London, 1953.

INTRODUCTION

Anticipating the forthcoming Beatification of Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matulevičius (which will take place in St. Peter's basilica, Rome on June 28, 1987), this is a translation of an excellent biography of this leading personality of Lithuanian religious and cultural history.

The author, Father Stasys Yla, is recognized as a prolific author and educator writing in Lithuanian. He is also listed as one of the outstanding members of the Living Catholic Authors of America. English speaking readers had a chance to appreciate this author's talent and style when in 1971 his memoirs of his life in a Nazi concentration camp under the title "A Priest in Stutthof" were published.

The editors of this biography, Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Putnam, Connecticut, anticipate with joy the Beatification of the Founder of their Congregation. They are convinced that the life and work of the future Beatified should be better known to the wider sircle of Catholics and non-Catholics in this country.

Reading this biography one will see not only the gradual development of this great and gifted man of faith but also be acquainted with the vividly painted context of Lithuania's struggle towards religious and cultural independence which resulted in the Declaration of Independence in February 16, 1918.

Because similar struggles are going on at present in various parts of the world, the person and achievement of the saintly Archbishop Matulaitis is able to speak convincingly to his contemporaries seeking religious freedom. The eternal values exemplified in the life and work of this Archbishop are universally appealing. It is hoped that his life's story will be received with interest.

V. CUKURAS, For the Editors

YOUTH, STUDIES, ANTS

We sing: "Where the Šešupė River flows." The Šešupė flowed through his native village of Lūginė, five kilometers north of Marijampolė. The village was small, with only eight inhabitants. It was divided up into single farms. The Matulaitis farm, consisting of thirty-two hectares, was on the outskirts of the village, between the forest and the Šešupė River, which flowed past the orchard of the farmstead. The farm was quite prosperous, and the farm buildings were clean and spacious. The flat land of the area was fertile.

The Matulaitises had lived in Lūginė for a long time. We know of grandfather Jonas, who had married Agnietė Vaišnys, Their son Andrius inherited the farm and married Ursulė Matulis from the village of Vaitiškis. Her brother Feliksas was pastor of a parish in Poland.

THE EIGHTH CHILD ARRIVES

The family already had seven children. Then, one spring, April 13th, 1871, the fifth son was born. A week later, on April 20th, he was baptized in Marijampolė by Father Jurgis Čėsna, a Marian Father who wrote in the record of births in Lithuanian: *Jurgis Boleslovas Matulaitis.* The child was a great comfort to his middle-aged parents. A typical four-year old boy, he followed his father, continuously asking questions. He was delighted when his father covered his little head with his big hat.

But one day the father was taken away to Marijampolė and never returned. Father Jurgis Čėsna, the pastor, entered the following in the parish records: November 13th, 1874, after receiving the sacraments, Andrius Matulaitis, a farmer, died at the age of 55 and was buried in the parish cemetery.

Now the farm became the mother's concern. She was helped by Jonas, the oldest son after Feliksas. Jonas was aware that he was to inherit the farm and would have to provide dowries for the unmarried sisters and also put Andrius through school. He plunged into the farm work and was quite tight-fisted with the money he was able to make.

Jurgis was nine when he began elementary school in Marijampolė. He had learned to read Lithuanian at home from the *Šaltinis* (Source), a

prayerbook, and books by well-known writer Bishop Valančius. The school teacher was a local man, but he taught in Russian since this was required. Religion was taught in Lithuanian by a Marian Father, Rev. Vincas Senkus. The situation was much better at the secondary (High) school since the Lithuanian language was taught there. Jurgis' brother, Andrius, had completed his studies at this school a year previously and had been admitted to the University of Moscow, where he studied physics and mathematics. Andrius had walked all the way to school and now Jurgis did the same.

On May 15th, 1881, during his second year at school, Jurgis lost his beloved mother who died quite suddenly at 58 years of age. His world was shattered. His sister, Magdė, had left home to marry. Little Jurgis now had to cling to his other sister, Emilija.

He did only fairly well in his studies. At home after school, he had little time for his books because Jonas put him to work. Jurgis did not dislike farmwork however Jonas' constant nagging was hard to take. To make things worse, something happened to his leg. He mentioned it to no one, but his friends noticed that he limped on his way to school. He limped at home and also at work. Jonas saw it but paid no attention. The neighbors thought that the boys had jostled him or that he had injured himself in a fall.

At the end of the year of mourning for their mother, Emilija left home to marry a frontier guard in East Prussia. In the fall of the same year his older brother and guardian, Jonas, brought home a bride from the neighboring village. Jurgis continued attending school, walking both ways like all the other neighboring children. A whole group of them would meet on the road. Jurgis made friends with Vincas Šlekys from the neighboring farmstead of Mokolai. On the way to school Jurgis would stop at Vincas' house and both would walk to school together. Mrs. Šlekys noticed that Jurgis' clothes were threadbare. His flimsy shirt was fit for summer wear only. She was appalled that one day, during a spell of cold weather, Jurgis showed up all blue from cold. She took him indoors and rubbed his hands and face, turning him around in front of the blazing fire to warm him up (Šaltinis, 1935, No. 4). All this made his leg worse.

Summer came. Jurgis tended the animals, watched the geese, worked in the fields and slept in the garden shed. His brother Andrius returned from Moscow for vacation and they became close friends. Andrius writes: "It was a pleasure to work with him and to take walks together. He was interested in every little herb, in every natural phenomenon." Andrius decided to prepare Jurgis for higher education and helped him with his studies (AJM, 183).

AT THE MARIJAMPOLĖ SECONDARY SCHOOL

In the fall of 1882, Jurgis took his entrance examinations for the first year of secondary school. In the same class was Justinas Staugaitis, future Bishop of Telšiai, three years older than Jurgis. "He was a pleasant, modest youngster," writes Staugaitis, "but he was not outstanding. It seems he had been poorly prepared for the first class. His performance was average and he missed classes often due to ill health. He was then known as Jurgis Matulaitis" (AJM, 87).

The joy of being in secondary school compensated somewhat for his bad leg, which still bothered him, especially during the winter months. He never complained, but his friends noticed that at times he seemed tired and pale. They observed him going to church after class to make the stations of the cross.

He suffered with this bad leg until his fifth year at school. Then the sore opened and he was forced to leave school. His sister-in-law became concerned and since she was childless, she took care of Jurgutis as if he were her own child. She urged her husband to drive him to a doctor but he stubbornly refused. Finally she herself took him to a doctor, Dr. Pavalkis. He came to the wagon, examined the leg and said that it must be amputated. They immediately consulted another doctor, Dr. Smolskis, who diagnosed the trouble as rheuma-

tism, prescribed medication and bed rest. No one dreamed that this was the beginning of tuberculosis of the bone. He returned home and continued his studies from borrowed books and somehow managed to pass fifth class. There was little hope of continuing further. Jonas decided it was enough. There was no further need for him to study. That summer he did not send him to work on the farm. He was left to guard the farmstead.

Jurgis slept outdoors in the fresh air by the granary. He took his medicine and walked with the aid of a crutch. His brother Vladas, began to worry about him. He was moved by Jurgis' misfortune and had previously paid for his education and rented a room for him in Marijampolė so that he need not walk back and forth to school. Now that he was on sick leave, there was little more that he could do for him. At home Jurgis was as drab as the grayness around him. He wore tattered clothes and made himself a pair of wooden shoes. Once when Mrs. Kocelis, the wife of a notary, was vacationing in Lūginė, she purchased a Sunday suit for him so that he could look presentable in church.

Despite his miseries, Jurgis' disposition was quite good and cheerful. People always called him "the student," that is, a real devotee of learning. The youngsters were the only ones who would jokingly call him "limpy." He was very much like the other youngsters at the farm but rather quiet, not talkative.

In those days, they used a plough made of wood bound with metal. When it needed repair, Jurgis brought it to the blacksmith or even tried to repair it himself. In winter he fed the animals. He brought them water in a wooden bucket. Sometimes he rode to the forest with his brother to help fell a few trees. At night, he would sometimes read a Lithuanian book purchased from the book smugglers. He was also fond of reading school notes borrowed from his friends.

Two years were spent in this way. He was now eighteen years of age. He still wanted to continue his formal studies, considering the priesthood. He mentioned this to his brother but the latter said nothing or, at most, muttered an incoherent reply. Then, in the summer of 1889, there came to Lūginė his cousin, his father's brother's son, Jonas Matulaitis, a teacher of classical languages in Poland at Kelce secondary school and also at the seminary. He went by the polonized surname of *Matulewicz.* While visiting, he became interested in Jurgis' potential. They talked it over and he offered to take him to Poland.

AT THE SEMINARY IN KELCE

When he arrived in Kelce, Jurgis' cousin immediately looked for a doctor to take care of Jurgis' leg. The cure was long but Jurgis was able to

continue his studies. He studied privately with his cousin's help. His cousin was proficient in Latin and Greek. During those few years, Jurgis reviewed his courses and studied new ones. He developed his knowledge of Latin and at 20 years of age he requested entrance at the Kelce Seminary and was readily admitted. The existing documents show a change in his name. He now spelled it *Matulewicz*, like his cousin. However, everyone knew him to be a Lithuanian and the only one in the seminary. In a very short time, he realized that the Latin professor was being hard on the "Litwin." Jurgis exerted himself all the more. The professor who disliked Lithuanians unwittingly made him the best Latin student.

His cousin paid for the seminary courses and in summer paid for his return trip home. Previously Jurgis had not been especially fond of the brush-covered, mysterious banks of the Šešupė River and the adjacent forest. He now absorbed all its peace and beauty. Sometimes he lived with his brother, Vladas, whose home was only a few kilometers away from the church of Marijampolė. He attended Mass daily.

When he stayed with his brother, Jonas, his wife pampered Jurgis with rich food, much to her husband's displeasure.

The year 1892 was an alarming one for the Kelce Seminary. This was Jurgis' second year here. A number of fires destroyed the Seminary and

damaged the church. The seminarians now had to find other seminaries to continue their studies.

TRANSFER TO WARSAW

Jurgis was sent to Warsaw. Two other seminarians went with him, for there were only three openings there. Jurgis entered the third course, which had 32 Polish students. Again he was the only Lithuanian student there. He was accepted in a friendly manner and even quite warmly by some. Among his colleagues was Henry Przezdziecki, the future Bishop of Siedlce, who writes:

"From the first day of our acquaintance with him we felt drawn by his powerful intelligence, extraordinary abilities and great spirit. Quiet, very industrious, friendly, inflamed with love of God, he endeared himself to us. All knew that he was a Lithuanian. We respected his feelings and he respected ours" (AJM, 11).

Jurgis remained here two years until the spring of 1895. That year the new Czar, Michael II, was scheduled to visit Warsaw. All of Poland's bishops arrived to discuss their Seminary's needs and to participate in the celebration of the Czar's visit. The Seminary of Warsaw invited the guests to take part in an academic debate which the seminarians were to moderate. The topic for the debate was the Holy Trinity. The main rebuttal speaker was Jurgis

and he surprised all with his theological expositions and especially with his facility in the Latin language. Even before this occasion, the seminary faculty had decided: "If he continues to be as zealous and exemplary, the Bishop of Kelce will send him to the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg." After his presentation there was no question as to his academic ability. Bishop Thomas Kulinski of Kelce granted him his permission, and a full scholarship was granted by the government.

He returned home, where he was awaited as a priest. Moreover, he was even greater in their esteem because he had been chosen to further his studies. As for Jurgis himself, he was pleased that the first part of his studies had been completed. He enjoyed his stay at home where he visited his people. He sought out his former high school friends, especially his neighbor and friend, Vincas Šlekys. After high school, Šlekys had decided to organize an underground *Sietynas* (Lustre) Society in order to distribute Lithuanian books. At that time, it was illegal to have such books. In 1894, he realized his project. He explained his plans to Jurgis and they both spent hours together conferring secretly in some back parlor in Šlekys' home. Šlekys was preparing to go to the United States of America since he had been invited to become editor of the newspaper *Garsas* (Sound), but due to the increasing demands of *Sietynas* had been delayed at home. "We spent the vacation together, visiting

each other daily. He copied my dictionary of rarely used Lithuanian words and I copied his. We reminisced about the restoration of the freedom of the press. We exchanged books," writes Šlekys (Šaltinis, 1935, No. 4,45)

THE ACADEMY OF ST. PETERSBURG

At the end of August, 1895, Jurgis arrived in St. Petersburg. He found Pranas Būčys, one year his junior at Marijampolė, already there. He came from the Seminary at Seinai. From Warsaw there was Henry Przezdziecki. There were other Lithuanian, Polish, White Russian students, twenty-six in all, in the first-year course.

The Russian capital of St. Petersburg had a freer, more encouraging atmosphere than Warsaw. The Academy, according to Pranas Būčys, reached great heights of academic excellence that year because of its well-qualified faculty and good teaching methods borrowed from the Jesuits.

Matulaitis, as in Warsaw, was first in his studies. As before, he received no low marks. He distinguished himself in sound spirituality. For this he was commended and pointed out as an example to be followed. All this did not go to his head, however. He was "... a simple, quiet, modest person with no false humility about him" (AJM, 12). He joined the Lithuanian students' organization at

the Academy and because of his greater maturity became "an outstanding member" (ibid. 30).

The first year passed by quite happily. During the second year the police came and informed the directors that Jurgis Matulaitis' room was to be searched. "Matulaitis at that time was taking a walk through the Academy gardens," wrote Būčys. He was intercepted and told to present himself to the Inspector who awaited him with the police Colonel and the District Attorney. All three escorted Matulaitis to his study room. During the search they found Latin publications, litho copies of books and, of course, manuscripts. They were most interested in his manuscripts but could not read the unfamiliar language in which they had been written. The Inspector explained that these were students' notes written in history class, in the Latin language.

The police interference resulted in no unfavorable incident. Matulaitis again resumed writing for Lithuanian newspapers, sent reports to the secret patriotic groups in the Seinai and Kaunas Seminary. One of his articles, meant only for his seminarian friends, written in 1896, was somehow obtained by Rev. A. Milukas in the United States and published in *Dirva-Žinynas* i.e. Land-Knower (1903, No. 9, 43-69). In this article Matulaitis posed this question: "Are we young priests and seminarians doing right by espousing the Lithuanian patriotic cause?" In asking for an answer, he comes to the conclusion that all nations are striving for freedom: the Hun-

garians, Czechs, Slovaks, the Irish. "Our people are awakening and rising up... The wheels of time cannot be stopped. You do not blow against the wind... God himself allowed people to form nations... The church never raises its hand against a person's nationality. Rather, she tries to perfect it, sanctify it and direct it to the Almighty... Therefore, nations cannot be annihilated." He further adds: "What is a nation? Just the land where we were born?... NO! It is that and more. It is its spiritual wealth, its freedom, the language which our mothers taught us. The nation also includes our rights, customs and traditions, our brothers among whom we live, sharing the Catholic faith which our parents transmitted to us during their lifetime. Can a Christian love his country? He not only can but he must do so, since God fills the heart with such love."

He explained the aims and methods of the Lithuanian patriotic movement so convincingly and concretely that J. Dovydaitis, the rector of the Kaunas Seminary, upon obtaining and reading the article, exclaimed: "It is the truth, but what dynamite!" He had called it "dynamite" because if such an article had been intercepted, the Russians would have liquidated the seminaries of Lithuania as they had done in Kelce.

Matulaitis continued to develop his ideas on nationalism and national interests. These same ideas later appeared in the Marian Congregation's

Constitutions, which he helped to revise (AJM, 31)

Before the conclusion of his studies, Jurgis returned home from St. Petersburg as a deacon. At the request of the Marian Fathers he delivered a sermon. He preached about pride and took his examples from real life. He spoke of the young shepherd full of pride because he can snap his whip better than most. Men pride themselves on being able to drink more than others and so on. After the services the farmers lit their pipes and made comments. They were pleased with the sermon. It was simple and sincere and they were able to understand it quite well. The people remembered his words for a long time (AJM, 172-73).

For the thesis required in obtaining his Master's degree in Theology, he selected the moral theology on the Right of War and Eternal Peace as currently taught by Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis. At the conclusion of the examinations he was awarded a gold medal with this evaluation: first with highest honors (*cum eximia laude, cum nota primus*). Shortly before, on November 20, 1898, he had been ordained to the priesthood and there in St. Petersburg, he celebrated his first Mass. He was 28 years of age, at the height of his maturity. It seemed as if his physical handicaps remained far behind him. All he needed now was to become involved in his ministry.

He visited his family and then went to Kelce because he was appointed to that diocese. He was

assigned as curate in the parish of Doleszyce about 6-8 kilometers from Kelce. The Russian government approved his appointment and stipulated his salary. The pastor accommodated him in some kind of a shed where the wind blew in and out and the rain leaked in. Under such conditions his old illness returned. He thought it might be rheumatism, but waited a few months before he decided to seek the help of a doctor. He thought it best to go to Kreuznach in Germany. It was famous for its rheumatic sanatorium and its radioactive spring waters. Obtaining a Russian passport for traveling abroad, he borrowed money from his cousin and departed. Dr. Kremer, the Director of the health sanatorium, could not diagnose the cause of the illness, and the pain did not abate. The doctor wrote out a prescription order for a cure at the Alpine Merano Hospital, then a part of Austria. Matulaitis sent the doctor's order to Warsaw and requested an extension of his passport for four months, but the government would grant him only four more weeks. Thereupon, Matulaitis set out for Fribourg in Switzerland to regain his health and to continue his studies.

AT FRIBOURG IN SWITZERLAND

By the end of December, 1899, he was in Fribourg where he enrolled at the University, assuming the name Montvydas in order to elude the

Russians. He settled in the Canisius dormitory. He learned that Pranas Būčys had arrived there earlier, and also Jonas Totoraitis and a few other Lithuanians under assumed names. They had some savings from their parish work to live on, but Matulaitis was soon forced to look for a job.

He found a curate's post in the suburban parish of St. John. The rectory was an old brick building near the Sarne River, not on its banks but further back in the valley. Dampness again! But there was no alternative. He began to preach short sermons in French, visit the sick and baptize. He had to set aside 50 francs from his salary for room and board. Little was left him, but he seemed to manage.

The double load, his parish work and studies at the University drained his strength. The suspected rheumatism continued to plague him. He turned to Dr. Clement, who enjoyed a good reputation but was rather expensive. The doctor questioned him about his illness, obtained its history, made a diagnosis and found it to be tuberculosis of the bone. He suggested an operation. It lasted two hours and a half. After the operation Matulaitis convalesced for a few weeks in the hospital and was under the care of the doctor for a whole year. The doctor visited him weekly and each time gave him painful injections. When the cure was completed, Matulaitis asked him what he owed him. Dr. Clement smiled and said: "Two

hundred francs for the operation and the injections" (Būčys, Memoirs I, 273). Normally the same treatment would have cost at least a thousand francs or more.

When he returned to his parish duties, Matulaitis obtained a better room and continued with his studies. His main course was in apologetics under the famous A. M. Weiss, author of six volumes on the subject. He also studied advanced dogma and sociology. Two languages were used at the university, German and French. He learned them both, being very gifted in learning languages. For example, he knew both ancient and modern Greek (AJM 105).

At Fribourg there was a Lithuanian students' society *Rūta* (Rue) and Matulaitis "was a most zealous member of the organization, always paid his dues and fulfilled the tasks assigned to him. These consisted of reading his articles to fellow members and being on duty at the library at designated hours... The society had founded a Lithuanian library and archives. Matulaitis himself was not the originator, but he assisted in all possible ways in their establishment" (ibid. 31).

The Polish students had their own society, *Liga Narodowa* (National League). They asked Matulaitis and Būčys to organize the Lithuanians according to the plan of the Poles, that is, as a political unit of national democrats (*Demokracja Narodowa*). "J. Matulaitis was the first to recognize the

dangers of this," writes Būčys, "and he brought my attention to them. Therefore, we both refused the invitation. We did not hurry with our refusal. We took our time to examine the matter thoroughly. During our investigation we discovered several things which the Poles had not pointed out to us because this would have prevented us from joining their organization." The Polish National Democrats later revenged themselves on Matulaitis for refusing to join their national movement (ibid. 31).

His health did not become worse, but Dr. Clement warned him that the illness could recur. He advised him not to overtax himself with studies. Matulaitis had expected to complete his studies in two years, but he only finished them in 1902. On July 21st he presented his dissertation: "The Russian Doctrine of the State of Original Justice." The paper received the highest award (*praeclarissime*) and a year later was published in Kraków. The Western theologians were most interested in it, for up to that time there was very little literature on Russian theological questions.

At Fribourg, J. Matulaitis' character was described by two collegues, a Lithuanian and a Pole. The first, Rev. Adolfas Sabaliauskas, wrote: "He had large, deep-set, thoughtful eyes. He seemed to be a quiet person, very pleasant and attractive, one who inspires friendship very easily." He then mentioned his facility in learning languages and his

experience in a foreign pastorate. Rev. Sabaliauskas then adds: "Father Jurgis' greatness was apparent even then. Such a person is not for one nation or one country" (ibid. 104).

The second colleague known from earlier days, Henry Przezdziecki wrote: "I had many opportunities to meet with him... At no time did his ego ever take precedence. He was not at all self-centered... I deeply valued his fine soul, his zeal, his great scholarship, his clear exposition in intricate theological questions, his deep understanding of legal, scholarly, social questions." Przezdziecki also added that the professors of Fribourg University wrote to Rome, emphasizing the young doctor's extraordinary talents (AJM, 101).

Having completed his studies, Matulaitis returned directly to Kelce. Bishop Kulinski had to wait a while before approval was given by the Russians for Matulaitis to become a Seminary professor. Consequently he began teaching only in the second semester, that is, at the beginning of 1903. He taught Canon Law as his main subject as well as philosophy and Latin. Canon Law was a maze of paragraphs but he did not get lost in its intricacies. Rather, he threaded through it a realistic social and juridical perspective. He interjected wise suggestions and urged the students to study foreign languages. The seminarians sensed his goodwill and respect for one and all. His face was always cheerful and smiling.

In the second year of teaching he was forced to go to Warsaw because the pain began to attack his leg and arm once again. This was a definite recurrence of the tuberculosis of the bone, as Dr. Clement had warned. After consultation with the specialists, he returned to Kelce and was prepared to commute for the cure, if necessary. After one visit he returned with metal braces on his leg and arm. During Mass he elevated the host and chalice with one hand only. Matulaitis continued to teach for a time but, at the beginning of November, 1903, he bade farewell and never returned.

A MOST DANGEROUS MODERNIST

After leaving Kelce, Father Matulaitis went to Warsaw with little hope. There was definitely something seriously wrong with his leg and arm, and his financial situation was not much better. His cousin was ill and Matulaitis was reluctant to approach him for a loan. On the outskirts of Praha there was a hospital for the poor where one could stay gratis. He went there and was assigned a bed in the general ward.

There were many patients there and the doctors were all volunteers. There was one permanent doctor, Dr. Raum, who was also the director of the hospital. He examined the ailing priest and began to treat him with injections. "My doctor," Matulaitis wrote to the Capuchin Father Kozminski, "is having more difficulty with my leg than expected. The remedy is very painful. However, one eventually gets accustomed to anything."

While he was hospitalized, the 1905 revolution against the Czar's government took place. The youth and the workers went out into the streets. The Russians fired at them but could not stop the people. The university and all the schools were closed. The normal life of the city was disrupted and this reflected on the hospital's supervision and order.

Father Matulaitis was near death. He was found in this condition by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart from a private secondary school for girls. This school had been founded by a noblewoman, Cecilia Plater-Zyberg. As soon as she was informed that a priest was dying in the hospital for the poor, she hurried over and was surprised to see a familiar face. Where had she seen this priest before? Could it be at Piaseczna, Canon Felix Matulewicz's parish?

"He is my uncle," the patient said.

The Countess took him to her school and supervised his care. She instructed Dr. Sawicki, the physician of the school, to attend to his health. The latter treated him the same way as Dr. Clement had, and the patient improved gradually. He now wrote to a Polish priest that his health had been very bad: "You could say that I was not living, but merely vegetating. Now my mind functions much better... I thank the Almighty that I can celebrate Mass and walk around my room with the

aid of a cane" (Listy O.J. Matulewicza, manuscript, 172).

The lady visited her patient daily, and her co-workers and friends came as well. Among these was Eugene Jarra. This talented and promising student of law writes:

"Arriving in a large, sunny room on the first floor, with glass doors opening out onto a flower garden, I saw a young man in bed covered with a blanket. He was about 30 years of age with a full, round face... From under thick eyelashes, the dark eyes were merry, lively and friendly, but also deep and intelligent. At first glance his personality seemed to be remarkably attractive and inspired such confidence that one wished to know him better" (Memoirs, in "Nasz Ojciec Odnowiciel," 52).

In the spring he was temporarily transferred to a nearby resort surrounded by a pine forest. Here he began to improve perceptibly and, on his return agreed to teach religion in the girls' school. There was a Lithuanian girl in the school, J. Žukauskas, who relates how the young teacher was escorted into the classroom by two men who held him up by the armpits and seated him at the desk. He had no control over one hand and the affected foot moved clumsily. The girl was then in the 7th form. Matulaitis taught apologetics. He lectured without a textbook, yet so well that several teachers attended these courses. Many questions were asked. He requested the girls to write out

their questions on index cards and place them on his desk before he came into the classroom. He answered all the questions clearly and completely, yet he always remained calm, pleasant and very patient (AJM, 107-108).

There was another Lithuanian girl who came to his room to serve him. Once when Jarra was visiting him, she brought in a small snack. Matulaitis thanked her and said something to her in another language. Jarra did not understand and asked what language he was speaking.

"The girl is from my country, Lithuania. It is pleasant for her to hear her own language," Matulaitis told him.

Jarra had thought that Matulaitis' native language was Polish because he spoke it so well. From their conversations, which touched on Poland's problems, it was evident that he understood the situation better than some of the Poles themselves. He was sympathetic and tried to suggest solutions to their difficulties.

AN ARMY OF 50,000 WORKERS

Poland's most acute problem was social. There was great poverty in the city and the country, and nothing was being done about it. Even the priests did not have enough insight into Christian social action and what it could accomplish. The terrible

conditions needed urgent remedies, especially now that the socialist revolution had flared up.

Matulaitis began to work on two fronts: he suggested ideas and offered concrete methods of action. His first idea was to organize a series of lectures explaining the social and economic problems. Among the Catholics there was no one truly competent in this field and there was some reluctance about inviting someone with socialist sympathies. Matulaitis advised the organizers to invite an expert, even if he were a leftist, rather than a Catholic who did not understand the situation. The lectures were to be open to a limited, select audience of persons who would have influence in public life. The group met three times a week at the girls' school. Matulaitis seated himself in an inconspicuous place and took notes. He was an active participant in the discussions. The lecturer criticized capitalism and Matulaitis pointed out where his ideas agreed with the principles of Catholic ethics.

The series of lectures lasted three or four months. They produced a practical resolution to organize the university students.

The other part of the task was to organize the workers. These were banded together by the pastor of All Saints' parish, Msgr. Marcel Godlewski. Eventually, Matulaitis extended the group's activities to all of Warsaw. He founded an alliance of Christian workers and had it legalized. He him-

self began to edit a bi-weekly edition of *Pracownik Polski* (Polish Worker). When incorporating the alliance he had specified the condition—that it should not interfere in politics. Actually this never worried him. The organization expanded rapidly and soon numbered 50,000 members. Concrete action was the foundation of the ideological movement. Matulaitis made these ideas popular both through the newspapers and lectures.

The next step was to begin courses in sociology. These were to start in 1906 but the Russians stopped them. A committee was formed to prepare the courses. The Russians finally granted permission and the courses began August 27-30, 1907. There were eleven lecturers and 700 participants—both priests and lay people. Among them there was a large group from Lithuania. The author and moderator of this series of lectures was Matulaitis himself. He expressed himself strongly, especially on practical matters. Everyone remembered these words which he repeated several times: "Give us people who are capable and determined to work on social reform because these are far more valuable than bricks (houses) or money."

The Lithuanian participants at the courses, mostly priests, met together one evening and invited Matulaitis to consider how to popularize Christian social ideas in Lithuania. They decided to plan similar lectures in Kaunas but open to a wider public and more applicable to the social needs of

Lithuania. Matulaitis was most pleased with this decision and promised to help implement it (Draugija, 1909, No. 31-32, 264).

UNREST AMONG THE CONSERVATIVES

Before the lectures began in 1906, a special commission on social problems was formed and the Archbishop of Warsaw appointed his suffragan, Casimir Ruškys, to be its president. He in turn entrusted Matulaitis to prepare an outline of the principles of social action. Matulaitis was also asked to write an extensive article on this question for the Polish Catholic Encyclopedia, and the article was included in its new edition.

Why was Christian democracy emphasized? Among the Poles there existed a "National Democratic" group (Narodowa Demokracja of the ND, its followers popularly known as the Endeks). Many Catholics and quite a large number of priests belonged to it. The group was very nationalistic and without a firm foundation of social principles. In the winter of 1906, under the sponsorship of the Endeks, a congress of priests was called to Warsaw to consider certain needed reforms. The congress was called without the approval of the Archbishop, who might have forbidden it. He hesitated to do so but did not want to sanction it, considering the troubled times and the reaction of the Russians.

The Archbishop summoned Matulaitis and Przezdziecki and conferred with them. They offered to remedy the situation. They both attended the congress to which some 400 priests had arrived from all parts of the country. They sat apart but joined in all the deliberations. They skillfully handled all questions so that the congress ended without any political scandal. On the contrary, it achieved positive results. The final results were perhaps not to the best advantages of the Christian Democrats but excessive political nationalism was successfully moderated.

The progressive, bold and successful social action which Matulaitis advanced aroused discontent among the conservative Catholics. Complaints were launched against him beginning with the Curia of Warsaw. "I was labeled an enemy of the Church, also a liberal, a socialist, a revolutionary, etc.," writes Matulaitis (Diary, 81). The Curia, of course, paid no attention. The complaints were sent to Rome. The person responsible for this was Earl Ostrowski, as it became apparent later on. In Rome Monsignor Umberto Benigni headed the secret group to fight against modernists in the Church. The group published a secret paper which was read throughout Europe where the integrist groups were active. In one of these papers Matulaitis was labeled "... as one of the most dangerous of modernists in the world" (E. Pulat, Integrisme, Tournai 1969, 190).

Matulaitis continued to remain in Warsaw because of his illness. At first he thought he would be a useless invalid. Now he realized that there is strength in weakness. The Warsaw experiment opened a wide field of action. Yet, he was a member of the Diocese of Kelce and had to return. He could not as yet do so, and many persons tried to persuade him to remain in Warsaw. He wrote to Bishop Kulinski and asked to be released from the diocese. The Bishop refused and advised him to return to the diocese and continue his recovery there. A little later Matulaitis again wrote and said that the power of sickness and death sets aside all other necessities and restrictions. Although he had saved his leg, he was still in need of an experienced doctor and such help could not be found in Kelce. He asked for his release again. The bishop again refused and this continued until 1907, when the latter died and the new bishop granted him his request. That same year Matulaitis obtained an invitation to teach sociology in St. Petersburg's Theological Academy.

A new problem now arose and Matulaitis had to make a decision. Practical social action is one thing, while the teaching of sociology in an Academy is another. What were his qualifications? Those who knew him could give an answer to this question. One of these was the above mentioned Jarra, later to become professor of sociology in England's Oxford University. "Profoundly erudite," he writes

about Matulaitis, "he gathered material zealously from all possible sources to solve the questions that interested him. He did not research just for pure knowledge, but for a definite purpose. I have seen him immersed in books, yet never writing one of his own." Matulaitis expresses his ideas clearly and comprehensively. As a speaker, he was articulate without any artificial or rhetorical affectation.

In Warsaw Matulaitis researched sociological literature and resolved many practical problems. He was a convinced theologian and recognized the limits to which social reforms can be taken. Thus he should have no qualms and continue to be courageously progressive. In the field of sociology this was a rare and commendable combination.

A GREAT FAVORITE WITH THE STUDENTS

The Theological Academy, transferred from Vilnius (Lithuania) to the Russian capital in 1842, as yet offered no course of studies in sociology. It could not do so because this field of study was forbidden, especially for priests, who would be punished for even possessing such literature. After the events of 1905, the Academy decided (1906) to inaugurate this chair of studies and the Russians agreed. The problem was to obtain a suitable professor. Preference was given to J. Matulaitis, who was well known for his social involvement. After being invited, he finally accepted.

He arrived in St. Petersburg in 1907, at the beginning of September, and brought with him a large quantity of literature which he later increased even more. For his introductury lecture, which was open to all, Matulaitis chose the subject of property, namely, the basis of the right to private property. All the students and professors attended.

The first lecture was delivered in flawless Latin and was later followed by other lectures in perfect Warsaw Polish. "He fascinated everyone," writes B. Čėsnys, "with his wealth of facts and his teaching method. But most of all his perfect clarity of mind intrigued us. I have heard many outstanding professors before him and since, but I admit that the exactness and lucidity of mind that sparkled in Professor Matulaitis' talk are hard to find. One must add to this his charming presence and attractive appearance, for he was then quite a young man... The students were ready to carry him on their shoulders... The auditorium could not contain all who crowded into it for the lectures" (AJM, 108-109).

Matulaitis taught theoretical and practical sociology in all four levels and explained the principles of general sociology, especially the Christian ones. He emphasized social wounds and suggested reforms to correct them. His lectures abounded with new perspectives and possibilities for solving the practical problems of society, for helping the workers, women and youth.

The students became intoxicated with these new possibilities and advanced ideas. Many wanted to transfer from other chosen courses to this one and Matulaitis had to persuade several students against such a step. "I myself was afflicted with such an 'illness'," writes the future dogmatist, B. Čėsnys, "but Matulaitis wisely restrained me and suggested that I remain with Professor Būčys... 'Sir, it is too late for you. Sociology is not the only important field. Theology is even more important. Let your young friend, Vladas Jurgutis, specialize in sociology.' I followed his advice and never regretted it" (ibid. 109).

Matulaitis, according to Būčys, prepared his lectures carefully by writing them out. He had sufficient material for publishing a book but managed to have only his introductory lecture printed. Later he was appointed vice-rector of the Academy and had no time to complete a book. It was soon apparent that, as a professor, his talents surpassed those of his predecessors (AJM, 20-21).

CONTACT WITH THE LITHUANIANS OF ST. PETERSBURG

The lecture halls could not contain Matulaitis. He was concerned about people, interested in practical social reforms. St. Petersburg was a cosmopolitan city with many ethnic groups, among them—

Lithuanians. In those days they numbered about 25,000—workers, tradesmen, officials, scholars, students and country people. All had immigrated with the hope of acquiring better positions. A few benefit and welfare organizations existed for some time now and the Russians permitted them to function. After 1905 new Lithuanian groups began to organize. Matulaitis was interested in all of them and attended whenever he was invited. Many times he read papers at the public *Lithuanian Catholic Club.* He held services and gave sermons to the assembled Lithuanians at the asylum for German children (AJM, 116).

There were more Poles than Lithuanians in St. Petersburg. The Russians did not trust them. Suspecting political motives, they forbade them to organize certain new organizations. They did permit the workers' organization, *Oswiata* (Enlightenment), which was similar in structure and design to the Warsaw project. Matulaitis' organization in Warsaw, once he had left, took a political turn and membership fell from 50,000 to 5,000. When Matulaitis learned that the organization had become plagued with factionalism, hoping to restore its original aims, he agreed to become president of Oswiata.

He was invited to preach at St. Petersburg's Cathedral and at St. Catherine's Church, where many believers gathered. He gave conferences in a Maltese church and to Catholic students of various

nationalities. He met with scholars and participated in their discussions. Thus his connections expanded and areas of action branched out. Ordinary people were the most important to him, and he had an extraordinary talent for approaching them.

SOCIOLOGICAL LECTURES IN KAUNAS

Matulaitis did not forget his promise made to his fellow countrymen in Warsaw in 1907. Once the Warsaw series of lectures were completed, the Lithuanian groups proceeded to obtain Bishop M. Paliulionis' approval, in January, 1912, to form an *ad hoc* committee of three members which thereafter increased to twelve. The Committee was chaired by the Auxiliary Bishop of Kaunas, G. Cirtautas.

Matulaitis and two of his academic colleagues, Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis and Pranas Būčys, received their invitations to come just for the 1909 Christmas vacation period, January 3 to 5.

Permission from the Russians was obtained only three days before the people began to arrive. Two hundred came and participated the first day; 250 on Sunday, the second day. The series was begun by Bishop Gasparas Cirtautas who spoke in Lithuanian, and all subsequent lectures were given in this language.

The greatest burden of these lectures was shouldered by Matulaitis who delivered three im-

portant lectures out of the seven. According to *Šaltinis* (1909, No. 4), these lectures "were beautifully constructed." The journal *Draugija* printed them in a special edition (1909, No. 31-32). *Šaltinis* included each speaker's photograph, and there was one of Matulaitis that had never been published before. It showed him as a young man, his head high and his wavy hair parted on the side He appeared manly, serious, courageous. One might say that he seemed to be a true leader. A careful examination of the photograph might well elicit an exclamation, such as: "A most dangerous modernist!"

This title raised Matulaitis to the rank of such persons as the Belgian Mercier and the Frenchman Verdier, both future cardinals who had been labeled "modernists" by Monsignor Benigni. It would seem that paradox is not absent even in the Church!

FROM SOCIOLOGY TO THEOLOGY

The series of lectures in Kaunas unquestionably produced great results. First of all, they were being looked upon as novel and advanced. Also, they had been organized using native resources, accomplished by the Lithuanians themselves. It was something that Kaunas could be proud of in those days. With this event, a new mood appeared in the already advanced Lithuanian Catholic movement, namely—that of social dynamics. Professor A. Dambrauskas-

Jakštas, editor of the magazine *Draugija*, could not refrain from remarking:

"The lectures were most informative both to the newcomers and the seasoned socialists who were accustomed to look on the Church with disdain. These talks gave our socialists an opportunity to see that the Church has a comprehensive view of the social question, superior to that perpetrated by the weak socialist pamphlets. The newcomers and the socialists who have complained incessantly of being cursed by the clergy will be able to understand, with the help of these lectures, that the true teaching of the Church regarding the social order not only does not curse the socialists but contains much that socialism itself regards as valid" (Draugija, 1909, No. 31-32, 386).

These lectures prompted the Kaunas Seminary to begin a course in social studies and sociology.

It is probable that these developments were the results of Matulaitis' influence. But suddenly, news reached Kaunas that Matulaitis was resigning as sociology professor at St. Petersburg effective in the fall of 1909.

A GENERAL WITHOUT AN ARMY

All his life Matulaitis had been concerned with the problems of others, but he was silent about his own. He had planned reforms and had helped others to plan. He was surrounded by many young people who absorbed his ideas. Thus he had prepared new workers for the future. Why then did he decide to leave the Academy and the youth? Why did he decide in favor of a new and unpredictable task, the reorganization of a dying religious order? What attracted, compelled and determined him to do so? Was it the reality in which he found himself, or a vision of the future?

A PLANNED VACATION

It was the spring of 1909. The school year was near its end. Jurgis had already discussed his idea

with Pranas Būčys. They decided to take their vacation together. During their long railway trip from St. Petersburg to Marijampolė, they reminisced about the days spent in Fribourg, Switzerland.

Theirs had not been a large group, they remembered—a small group of priests—the biblical seven. They all came from Sūduva, in the southern part of Lithuania. However, only one of them was interested in this idea, which was now taking them both to Marijampolė.

On reaching Marijampolė, they knocked on the monastery door and asked to see Father Senkus. He came down and recognized his parishioner Jurgis and also Pranas, who visited them occasionally.

"With what news—good or bad—have you two come here from so far?" asked Senkus.

"We will tell you soon enough, provided the walls are thick enough." The old man realized that the young priests were not joking and he led them to the second floor. The first to speak was Jurgis Matulaitis.

"We, Pranas and I, have decided to become members of the White Fathers." The old man held out his hands as if to embrace them.

"But, hold on. It is not as simple as all that. we will have to remain where we are at the Academy at least for some time. We must obtain the

Bishop's permission and approval in Rome, but most important of all—I would like to hear your opinion."

The three of them studied the situation. It was after all an illegal step and one which went against the government's regulations. Rome, too, might deem it inadvisable. If there were no new members, but these two candidates, there would be no future for the Marians. If more members were found, where and who would train them? How and where would they work and keep in touch with the monastery? If there were no prospects and guarantees to be had, would it be worth the effort?

They considered the situation from all angles, foresaw possible dangers and failures, and agreed nevertheless not to wait but to begin the necessary process. Senkus gave Matulaitis authorization to act by contacting the bishop and to write to Rome as soon as this could be done.

After this meeting, Matulaitis and Būčys bid farewell. Then Matulaitis met with the apostolic administrator of the diocese of Seinai, Monsignor J. Antanavičius, explained matters to him and got his permission. Now Father Jurgis needed to reach Warsaw's suffragan, K. Ruškys, who attended to the affairs of secret religious orders. With the approach of summer, everything was ready. Matulaitis needed only a passport for traveling abroad and this was obtained for him by the Academy.

He left for Italy and reached Rome at the beginning of August, 1909. On presenting himself to the Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, Vives y Tuto, he gave him a copy of his plans and recommendations for the renewal of the Marians. The Prefect, Cardinal Tuto, in turn conferred with the Consistory's Prefect, Cardinal Lai and the Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val. Matulaitis was then invited for a consultation with all three. He answered their questions satisfactorily and persuasively. His plans were granted full approval and he was given an audience with the Pope. Pope Pius X gave Matulaitis permission to make his first vows without completing his novitiate. Būčys was given permission to begin his novitiate without resigning his professorship.

When Matulaitis had arranged everything and obtained the necessary papers, he left Rome with the intention of stopping in Warsaw on his return. From there he notified Senkus and Būčys that all was in order and asked them to come and visit him. He began his retreat in preparation for his religious profession. Senkus and Būčys arrived in Warsaw on August 29. That day, in Bishop Ruškys' private chapel, with Senkus as witness, Jurgis pronounced his first vows as a Marian religious. That year Būčys entered the novitiate.

They left Warsaw for Marijampolė. Būčys wanted to make a retreat, and Jurgis conducted it

for him alone. Before returning to St. Petersburg, both visited Rev. Paulius Dogelis, a young curate at the Cathedral in Kaunas. He was told that they were reorganizing the Marian Fathers and were seeking candidates. Rev. Pranas Turauskas, the curate of Holy Cross Church in Kaunas was also approached and left with a copy of the new Constitution. If he were interested, they told him, he could contact them. It was made clear, of course, that candidates would have to speak to their bishop before taking such a step. Dogelis writes that both he and Turauskas did decide to join the Marians and notified Matulaitis, but Bishop G. Cirtautas withheld his permission (AJM, 121).

Thus they lost two candidates and returned to St. Petersburg with only Jonas Totoraitis, who was to begin his novitiate there.

CHAPLAIN AND VICE-RECTOR OF THE ACADEMY

When Matulaitis returned to the Academy, he was given new duties, namely those of Spiritual Director and Chaplain to the students. The position meant preparing spiritual conferences and retreats, more time in the confessional and greater availability to those students who might wish advice on spiritual matters.

It was a welcome task. What a coincidence—hardly had he become a religious and here he was immediately required to give *spiritual direction.*

This is what the students had to say about the help they received that year from Matulaitis. "When you open your notes and read again the remarks of Matulaitis' conferences and retreats, you see how much wisdom, genuine spiritual insight, coupled with concrete realism there is in them and what a warm love he had for everyone! His asceticism was based on theology, natural ethics, psychology and pedagogy, not on fantasies or personal opinions." (Bishop M. Reinys, AJM, 97).

"The practical element in J. Matulaitis' life was stronger than the theoretical," writes P. Būčys. "Therefore, as professor he freely undertook those duties which directly elevate the spirit." Būčys had in mind spiritual direction, such as is given in retreats and conferences.

That year J. Matulaitis taught dogma at the Academy and since he was well prepared in this field, he expected to have more time for the needs of the religious community that was being formed. He had promised to send to Rome, as soon as possible, the new Constitutions of the Marians, adapted for work in secret and incorporating new fields of apostolic endeavor. He finally completed the Constitutions in the beginning of 1910. He had them printed and sent to the Congregation for Religious in Rome for approval. The Constitutions were officially approved on October 28, 1910.

As Spiritual Director, Matulaitis gave his services to several students who sought a deeper spir-

itual life. Now he was able to give them a copy of the approved Constitutions to read. A few others, both Lithuanians and Poles, expressed their desire to be accepted into the Congregation.

This was his third year of teaching. On completing it, he intended to resign his professorship, but when he left for vacation, he did not inform the authorities about his plans. On his return in the fall, he was given a new position—that of vice-rector of the Academy, a post previously held by Mačiulis-Maironis. He could not resign now, for his appointment had been already approved by the Russian government. He agreed to fill the position for one year. He also temporarily assumed the duties of rector.

The students were very happy with his appointment. The Academy could not have chosen a better and more understanding man, one who favored gentle, yet wise discipline. It was rumored that Matulaitis would soon become a bishop. The bishop of Kelce did raise him to the rank of honorary canon (Diary, 81). About this time the Russians began to search around for secret organizations. This was an indication that he could not remain longer than a year at the Academy, and also that he should avoid all gatherings, even retreats. The most important problem now was to determine a place for the novitiate, since St. Petersburg was no longer safe.

A GENERAL WITHOUT AN ARMY

It was not quite the end of the school year when news arrived concerning the death of Vincas Senkus, the last Superior General of the White Fathers. The telegram reached Matulaitis the day of his death, April 10, 1911. P. Būčys went to the funeral. On his return, he reported that the deceased had willed the amount of 6,000 rubles to Matulaitis for the purpose of the renewal of the Marians.

The Russians thought that they had put an end to the Congregation, just when a new chapter of its existence began to unfold. The Russians would not honor the will of Father Senkus. Consequently, Matulaitis did not receive the money designated for the renewel of the Congregation.

That summer, a third candidate—Jonas Totoraitis, with a doctorate in history—completed the novitiate. At this point Matulaitis resigned his professorship and returned home for good. Pranas Būčys came with him for the vacation period. All three decided to go to Gelgaudiškis for a visit. The local pastor received them in a most friendly manner. After dinner they talked for a long time. The guests then expressed their wish to visit the church for a prayer. The host graciously permitted his learned friends to do just that. He did not know that this was why they had come in the first place.

They all prayed. Then Jonas Totoraitis, in the presence of the two witnesses, professed his first

vows. There was one more important thing to do—to decide which of the three would take over Father Senkus' duties. After more prayer, Būčys suggested Matulaitis. Totoraitis seconded the choice. Then they considered what to do about the novitiate. There was no alternative but to move it to a safer place—to Switzerland.

The following morning they went their separate ways. Matulaitis hurried off to Kaunas, for he had promised G. Cirtautas, the new Ordinary of Kaunas, to conduct two retreats for the priests of the diocese.

"The parish priest," Matulaitis began in Lithuanian "is more neglected than the parishioners. The people are given sermons and reminded of their duties, but no one ever says anything to the pastor. Even when he goes to a friend to confess, he hardly ever receives any words of spiritual direction. You have worked a long time in the parish. Now, my brothers, give yourselves these five days. Leave your parish to divine guidance. Nothing unfortunate will happen during those days. Forget everything. Keep your attention on God and your commitment."

The priests felt his fatherly concern and were moved by it.

"This retreat was actually more like a course in asceticism" writes A. Dambrauskas-Jakštas. "He gave four conferences daily and twice a week he helped us to make an examination of conscience.

The listeners were pleasantly surprised by the vivacity of the talks and the beauty of the Lithuanian language. Even the most abstract and philosophical ideas were easily understood because of the way they were presented by the director. These first retreats preached in Lithuania not only made a great impression on the listeners and strengthened their spirit but showed them that God's word could be expressed beautifully and clearly in the Lithuanian language, without adding any foreign expressions. It was an important beginning which led to further significant events" (Draugija 1911, No. 54, 196).

After the second retreat, which was held early in July, Matulaitis received a new novice and they went to Fribourg, Switzerland. Soon, more priests and lay men joined them and they settled in the students' dormitory—the Canisius (AJM, 42).

The novitiate was conducted secretly under cover of studies and when they bought a separate building, they named it "Home of Studies." The principal objective, in addition to the courses at the University, was religious formation. Matulaitis arranged the program and directed it himself. He was the Novice Master.

AN OATH AT THE APOSTLE'S GRAVE

On reaching Rome, Matulaitis went directly to the Congregation of Studies, which is in charge of

priests, seminaries and Catholic universities. He presented his report on the status of the St. Petersburg Academy and showed them its publications. At the Congregation for Religious he met with the Secretary, Monsignor Caroli and presented him with two requests: to legalize the establishment of the novitiate in Fribourg and to confirm the election of the new superior of the Marians, that is, himself.

Having accomplished this, he visited some of the churches in Rome and prayed. He visited the Ukrainian and Polish clergy teaching in schools or working in the Roman Curia.

Wherever Matulaitis went, there were questions about conditions in Russia. This displeased him. "It seemed to me that, here, they were overconcerned with politics and diplomacy. I had come for other reasons—to serve the Church. I believed it more worthwhile to work under God's inspiration than in their crafty diplomacy and calculations" (Diary, 1911.VI.21).

In the new Constitutions, he had recommended that the Marians become acquainted with the activities of other religious congregations. And so he visited the Jesuit Generalate where Father Ledochowski had his office. He told him of the progress of the renewal of the Marians and wanted to know what the Jesuits thought most important in religious life, especially in religious formation, which might benefit the Marians. Ledochowski enumer-

ated many things and touched on asceticism, which was important both for priests and religious.

Matulaitis returned to the Congregation for Religious, and Monsignor Caroli informed him that everything had been confirmed.

That same day he visited St. Peter's Basilica and before the Apostle's grave he made the following oath: "... that neither he nor the Marian Congregation would ever serve any purpose other than God, the Church and the salvation of souls."

TEMPTATION TO A DIPLOMATIC CAREER

Upon meeting, Father Grum-Grzymajlo told Matulaitis that he had taken quarters in the same hotel where he lived. Thus, they were able to meet and converse more often. It was obvious that the secret priest was very erudite. He had completed his studies at the Jesuit University in Innsbruck. He knew several languages and had the intimate confidence of the Pope. Perhaps at his suggestion Matulaitis resolved to see Msgr. A. S. Sapieha, the Secretary of State for Extraordinary Affairs. The appointment was arranged in the evening after office hours. Monsignor Sapieha was four years older than Matulaitis. He had already risen high in the service of the Vatican. That evening, they spoke in general about the needs of the Church, when suddenly Sapieha changed the subject. He offered Matulaitis a position, where he could remain in Rome

and represent the needs of Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Poznan and Galicia and inform the Apostolic See on conditions in those countries. Sapieha had already discussed this with the Prefect, Cardinal Lai. Such diplomatic representation was absolutely necessary in Rome.

The offer was unexpected and unacceptable to Matulaitis. He had to find a polite way of refusing it. He writes in his diary: "I enumerated the difficulties I foresaw on my part: a) I had just begun to serve the newly revived congregation, and this work was not to be interrupted; (b) I am a Lithuanian. Would the Polish have confidence in me? (c) I know no Italian, although this could easily be corrected; (d) I have no talent for diplomacy and speak French poorly. I am clumsy in hosting visitors. I am more articulate when I speak on a one to one basis than at public gatherings. I am inclined to say little and find it hard to carry on a conversation; (e) generally speaking, my aim in life is just the opposite. Up to now I have avoided positions of honor.

Monsignor Sapieha would not relent. He inquired whether the Marian Congregation could not be governed from Rome and thus, both tasks could be accomplished at the same time. He asked Matulaitis to think it over and to give him his decision on October 28th.

Matulaitis conferred with some of his friends. All of them, including Father Grum, urged him to

accept the offered position. Nevertheless, Matulaitis could not. "I am not at all pleased with the idea of our Congregation being in Rome with the subsequent danger of its members being involved in diplomacy and politics. My inmost spirit tells me that regardless of Monsignor Sapieha and Father Grum, I must hold to my initial project." He continues in his diary: "Sometimes we see those in high positions doing less for God than those of lower rank. I have seen a person work very effectively in a less prominent position and perform poorly when promoted. Therefore, I think it best ...to continue the work that I have already started."

On the appointed day Matulaitis met with Sapieha and informed him that the position offered could be accepted by him only after a few years. He thanked him for the proposition. In the streetcar he met Father Ledochowski by chance and mentioned to him the offer made by Sapieha, as well as his concern for his new task of renewing the Marians.

"Age, quod agis," said Ledochowski. "Do what you are doing!"

THE MARIAN NOVITIATE AT FRIBOURG

He spent two weeks in Rome. Then he returned to his novices and found everything as before. The spirit was the same. Study hours were silent but there was laughter during the breaks.

They seemed to get on well with each other, as if they were members of the same family. There was no friction between the Lithuanians and Poles. The latter studied Lithuanian, and the former tried to learn Polish. The Constitutions were explained in separate groups, to each in its own language.

The Novice Master strove to unify and harmonize the efforts of the group, urging them all onward. He would go out into the city and come back with armloads of books. The library grew and the novices made good use of the books. Matulaitis' aim was to provide students with a good ascetical foundation through study and reading. On Saturdays he also went to the Albertinum to hear the students' confessions and he was often invited to give conferences to the Polish students who were not yet ordained priests (Diary, 223, 229).

Matulaitis' second aim in religious formation was to perfect the natural abilities of his novices. "Be alert," he would tell them, "develop your powers of observation and learn to be articulate. Express your ideas clearly and firmly. Enunciate, speak convincingly and without hesitation."

The young Polish priest who enthusiastically studied Lithuanian writes: "Matulaitis loved to take us out walking under the linden trees, not too far from the building. A longer walk tired him easily because of the brace which encumbered his leg... Seeing his ever smiling and calm face, we never realized how much he must suffer. He knelt along

with us on the hard wooden kneelers in the chapel, until it dawned on us to put a soft cushion in his place for the bad leg."

"He taught us and tested our determination but always in a gentle manner," continues Wisniewski. "He was against all drastic measures in spiritual exercises for he did not wish a person's dignity to be hurt. He did not, for example, advocate kneeling in humility at the Superior's feet... He knew this to be an insufficient means of disciplining one's pride. He would use a more subtle method. If, for example, you were to boast of having come out quite well in a discussion, Father Matulaitis, with a few choice words, would direct the conversation to some trifle and thus make the speaker collect himself. You felt as if someone had wiped your nose for you... Embarrased, you would look at the teacher, and he would smile, look you in the eye, and then resume the interrupted conversation. This method worked. It cured self-love but did no harm to one's personal dignity."

"When he was obviously displeased with my confession and when correction was needed, he would come and confess to me. He did this without affectation and very humbly. My teacher and General confessing to me was an experience that moves me even now..."

"Future events confirmed how deep his wisdom was and how penetrating his power of discernment. Even now I am amazed at our beloved

teacher's foresight which was the fruit of many years of experience, of untiring enthusiasm and sense of duty."

His constant activity or his sense of duty prompted him to rise early. The novices saw a light in his room at three or four o'clock in the morning. Without doubt he would tire. At times, he would lie down during the day, not to sleep but to read. Often he lost his appetite for food. When a novice asked him whether it was necessary to fast, Matulaitis told him:

"Thank God that you can eat. A time will come when you won't be able to eat."

Sometimes, the novices had discussions about nationality. Matulaitis would not permit them to express any negative attitudes toward any nation, not even toward the Russians. "You cannot condemn an entire nation just because of a few bad people," he would say.

Matulaitis spent the late evening hours reading and answering letters that were coming from various countries and in different languages. His replies were awaited by his "secret brothers," his benefactors, his colleagues and his many, many friends and acquaintances.

He was interested in America where there was a larger number of immigrants from Lithuania and where there was freedom for religious organizations. He corresponded with Father Staniukynas, patron of the newly founded Sisters of St. Casimir.

Would it be possible to place a few of his brothers in Chicago? If they were to return to Lithuania at present, they would be scattered all over and it would be better for them to be centered in one place. Staniukynas' answer was most encouraging and Matulaitis was ready to set out for America.

JOURNEY TO AMERICA

It was the beginning of July, 1913, when he and two other priests who had completed their novitiate, Feliksas Kudirka and Julius Kazakas, left Fribourg. "The boat trip was quite pleasant," he wrote to Father Vincas Dvaranauskas. "Sea-sickness did not bother us. However, I did have a headache at times. My head felt heavy, uncomfortable (Diary, 129).

The ship arrived in New York on July 19th. For three days they visited the local Lithuanian priests and then hurried off to Chicago. An audience with Archbishop E. J. Quigley was granted at once, and Matulaitis explained the purpose of his visit. He asked permission to establish a religious house in the Chicago Diocese. The Archbishop was in favor of the idea but asked them to wait until he had found suitable quarters.

Father Staniukynas offered Matulaitis "a good job"—to conduct a ten-day retreat for the Casimirite Sisters. Matulaitis writes: "After this, I amended their Constitution according to Canon Law and

the requirements of the Church. Then I gave lectures in three parishes on social questions" (ibid.).

On August 18th, the Archbishop designated St. Michael's parish for the Marians, with Kudirka as pastor and Kazakas as his curate. Two years later, having completed his novitiate in Fribourg, Father Vincas Kulikauskas arrived; then, in 1916, having resigned his position at the St. Petersburg Academy, Professor Pr. Būčys came as well.

Matulaitis spent one month in America.

IN LITHUANIA, A YEAR LATER

Matulaitis was impressed by the free and open Lithuanian-American life style. On his return to Fribourg he felt constricted and isolated in the "House of Studies." There were only a few novices now. In the beginning there were eleven, and after three years their number did not exceed twenty. Was it necessary to stay here because of the handful of novices and to overlook the great numbers of students, priests asking for retreats, and people who were hungry for knowledge and in need of spiritual encouragement?

"Whether there will be any results from my hard and demanding work only God knows. He is the One who grants success to all our undertakings," he wrote in a letter to his brother Jonas. "Although some people consider my work to be a mere daydream, I, to tell the truth, have no time

for dreaming. I must work hard every day from morning to night, with little time even to go out for a walk... What people say about me is their affair" (Diary, 128).

It was a comfort to him that the Church authorities approved of his labors. But a suspicion was arising in the Catholic and religious Fribourg University. What kind of group was this? Were they not modernists? The University authorities reported the group to Rome but there was no reaction. Rome knew all about Matulaitis and what he was doing. Matulaitis had not informed the University authorities about the existence of the Marian novitiate because, if the Russians learned about it, they would have hindered the return of the novices to their native lands. The title of modernist was pinned on him once again, most likely because of previous warnings which appeared in Monsignor Benigni's bulletin.

It was now imperative to be more cautious in dealing with the Russians. Jurgis Matulaitis writes to Father Feliksas Kudirka (1914.II.17): "Father Matulaitis [Kazimieras] sent us a candidate from London. He claimed to be a Russian and desirous of being a Catholic priest. Upon closer examination I realized that he was a Jew and more than likely a spy. He had not expected to meet someone who had been in St. Petersburg and Moscow and who was familiar with Russian theology. Of course, I immediately rid myself of this person."

In the spring of 1914, Matulaitis received an invitation from the bishops of Seinai and Kaunas to come to Lithuania to conduct a retreat for priests both in Kaunas and in Marijampolė. Matulaitis at once wrote to the bishops, accepting the invitation. He was happy at the prospect of a visit with his own people. He was also delighted to be able to breathe the air of his native land and at the same time to have the opportunity of serving his brother priests. On May 25th he left for Poland because he had certain matters to take care of in Krakow, Częstochowa and Wloclawk.

The first retreat he conducted was for the priests of the Kaunas diocese. There were two groups of them: the first was larger—250 priests; the second smaller. Matulaitis also had the opportunity to speak with the now Bishop Pranas Karevičius about the establishment of a religious community for women. (While in Fribourg, Switzerland, next to novitiate, he had two Lithuanian women candidates, Miss Agota Kudirka and Miss Marcelė Jurevičius). Without stopping for a rest, he immediately left for Marijampolė to conduct a retreat for the priests of the Seinai diocese.

The priests gathered in large numbers. Although this was a diocese of mixed nationalities, only Lithuanians attended. "We were absolutely fascinated," writes Justinas Staugaitis, "with the maturity of Father Jurgis' ideas and his deep understanding of the spiritual life" (AJM, 89).

In the evening the priests came in to talk with him. Some had personal problems, others had heard that the Marians were being revived and were considering the idea of entering the Congregation. The two new Marians, Totoraitis and Dvaranauskas, spoke to Matulaitis of their concern for the future of the community. They wanted to know what to do about their parish in Marijampolė. Should they ask the Bishop to appoint one of them as pastor of the church so that the Marians could eventually take over the parish? However, it did not seem to be advisable as yet.

After the retreat, the priests involved in social action wished to meet with Matulaitis. They were Juozas Laukaitis, Justinas Staugaitis, and Motiejus Gustaitis. The latter was the sponsor of the *Žiburys* Society's primary school for girls in Marijampolė. The Russians were dissatisfied that the subjects were taught in the Lithuanian language, but the parents were more disposed to send their daughters to this school for this very reason. The school's uplifting spirit was due to the directress, Miss Marija Pečkauskas, a famous writer who also was an excellent educator and was idolized by the girls. The financial situation of the school had improved because Princess Magdalena Radvilas had recently donated 2,000 rubles for its maintenance.

It was difficult for Matulaitis to detach himself from the people and their problems. His own relatives also needed him—in Marijampolė, there

was his brother Jonas and his wife Veronika who had been so good to him when he was a child. Jonas had lost both his farm and his health. He was dissatisfied with himself and with God. Vladas remained in Bliudžiškė, and Magdalena in Klevinė. All their children were grown up now. He could not contact the other members of the family because they lived farther away and he was in a hurry to return to Fribourg.

It was the last day of July. The Russian army was on the move. They claimed that this was only a military exercise, but on August 1st, just as Matulaitis was getting ready to leave, the news broke like a thunderclap: War! The borders of Germany were closed and no trains were running. Matulaitis hurried off to Kaunas in the hope that he could reach Vilnius and then go on to Warsaw and Switzerland. Unfortunately, he was able to get no further than Warsaw.

AN INTERRUPTED JOURNEY

Since no trains were available to the West, Matulaitis found a coachman and asked to be taken to 24 Piękna Street. The porter opened the door and was astonished: "Father Jurgis! I'll go at once and announce your arrival to Madame Countess."

Accommodations were found in the girls' school where he had previously convalesced. He was told not to worry about anything. He was invited to rest and to wait until it became possible for him to go back to Switzerland.

The guest hurried to send a telegram to Fribourg to let them know that he could not arrive as promised. A reply came back soon, which showed that communications with neutral Switzerland were possible. Matulaitis felt relieved.

In the first place, a visit to Archbishop A. Kakowski, the former rector of the St. Petersburg Academy was arranged. He also paid a visit to the suffragan Bishop Casimir Ruškys. The latter was surprised and overjoyed to see him. The guest's countenance reflected a problem and a question—how long would he have to wait in Poland? Bishop Ruškys did not know but he readily guaranteed to keep him busy. "Warsaw, you know, still remembers your lectures and sermons."

"I have a very solid proposition," Ruškys continued.

Matulaitis listened with anticipation.

"You may have heard of Madame Princess Magdalena Radvilas?"

"I just recently received word from Reverend Motiejus Gustaitis about her. Did you not ordain him in Warsaw in 1893?

"And, what did he have to say about her?"

"The Princess has donated a substantial gift to the Lithuanian Girls' Primary School in Marijampolė.

"Now she won't leave the Warsaw Curia in peace. She has asked us to find and appoint a Lithuanian priest as rector of the Child Jesus Church, the church on Moniuszko Street in the center of the city. The present occupants are willing to hand it over to the Lithuanians. Give me a Lithuanian Marian to care for the church. If one is unsuitable, send another. If we appoint a secular priest he

might antagonize the people, disappoint the Princess and all Warsaw would be laughing at us."

"I would gladly give you one, if I had him. Do you remember what I said in my social courses: Give me people, trained people! We just do not have anyone. Perhaps later, when, God willing, we are blessed with more vocations."

Both became silent. It was time to leave before the visit became prolonged. Matulaitis excused himself and bid farewell.

FORGET BOTH SWITZERLAND AND LITHUANIA!

Early in September the Rector of the priests' seminary wrote to Matulaitis asking him to conduct a retreat for the seminarians before the beginning of the school year. In these circumstances Matulaitis could never say "no." He agreed, although he had an inkling that Bishop Ruškys had something to do with this. "We won't let you be idle, you know!"

Preparations and developing plans kept him occupied. The anxiety over Fribourg decreased, as if buried somewhere in his subconscious. He chose for his theme the subject of holiness. Not only the seminarians made the retreat but also the Rector and all the professors. The reactions of participants were very favorable. The conferences were lively and realistic. Nothing like this had even been preached before.

Some time passed and another request came: conferences for the intelligentsia were being arranged. Two well-known speakers had already been invited, Reverend Szlagowski and Archbishop Teodorowicz. Couldn't Matulaitis make it a trio? "No doubt it was Bishop Ruškys' wish to have me included, so that I would not succumb to the melancholy of "Swiss illness," Matulaitis reasoned. After the conferences, the Warsaw participants complimented him lavishly and thanked him for his profound ideas and for the apostolic fervor he had expressed.

He had several opportunities to admire the Radvilas church on Moniuszko Street. Brief devotions with religious instructions were given from time to time to the high school students. Matulaitis conducted them, of course. Countess Plater provided similar "work" for him at her girls' secondary school.

Yet he did not overlook the needs of the Marians. In Warsaw there were the Reverend Wladislaw Lysik and Reverend Casimir Bronikowski. He met with them and considered what to do next. The Russians, they decided, were the immediate threat and this prevented them from undertaking more extensive plans. They agreed to limit themselves to looking for new candidates.

The spring of 1915 arrived. The snow melted, the trees began to bud. Something was stirring at the war front and the Russians began to retreat.

The people expected the fighting to be fierce. But the Germans soon appeared and the Russians retreated all the faster.

Matulaitis immediately sought out the German offices which might be able to grant him permission to travel to Switzerland.

"Are you a diplomat?" asked the officer.

"No."

"A citizen of Switzerland?"

"No."

He tried to explain that he had important business there.

"There is a war going on!" the German said. "No one can leave the country to travel."

He tried again, after a pause, to request permission to go to Lithuania. The questions were repeated.

"Whose citizen are you? Russia's? What diocese do you belong to? Kelce, Poland? It is impossible for you to travel there!"

"I'm stalled," reasoned Matulaitis, "I can go neither forward nor back. Since there is nothing I can do about it, I must start working here without delay. What better work is there for me to do than *age, quod agis.*"

SEARCHING FOR A HOME FOR THE MARIANS

He decided to visit Bishop Ruškys again, not in the Curia but in the Holy Cross rectory where

he resided. He explained the entire situation to the Bishop. It was impossible to leave the country just now, but if he were to remain here after the Russian danger passes, it would be necessary to see to the needs of the Marians. First, there must be a place for the novitiate. Then it would be good to bring together the scattered priests, those who have taken their vows, and place them all under one roof to form an organized Congregation. The request is this: help the Marians find a home.

"Bieliany! You've heard of it?" the Bishop raised his head. "It was once a Camaldolese monastery. The Russians dispersed the monks, killing some. They sequestered the place and were ready to rebuild it as an Orthodox church, but the people protested and the Russians didn't dare to proceed with the plan. However they took it over for the army, and the buildings have deteriorated. Now the Russians are gone and the Germans certainly will not be interested in such a heap of rubble. The Archbishop, I believe, will agree to give it over to you, but. . ."

"I would like to hear that 'but'," Matulaitis fixed his eyes on the bishop.

"It will take a great deal of hard work to repair the monastery and there are so few of you."

"We are not afraid of hard work. The Marians are being revived not just for prayer."

Archbishop Kakowski granted the request and gave the place to the Marians. Father Bronikowski, an older priest, was appointed rector of the church. Matulaitis soon came down from the secondary school. He chose to live in one of the small houses of the Camaldolese Fathers.

The city government learned about the installation of the Marians at Bieliany and presented them with a very serious request: there were a few hundred orphans in the city with no one to look after them. Could the new religious community take care of them? The city was not at all concerned with the fact that there were very few religious. Matulaitis considered the request with his two advisors. They were reluctant, but Matulaitis convinced them that this was one of their primary duties—to help others. In these circumstances he did not know the word "no."

Religious Sisters were needed to care for the children. Bishop Ruškys suggested asking the secret Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary and they agreed to come. The transfer and housing of the children began at once. The houses were badly in need of cleaning and repair. As a result, the Sisters worked hard to make them habitable. They succeeded. Soon the houses were filled with 200 children of various ages.

It was summer. The children had to be fed, sheltered and looked after. The city had promised

to give help but was unable to do so. The Marians turned to the Germans who controlled the distribution of food. Matulaitis spoke German and went several times to the Commandant's headquarters. He experienced first hand the difficulty of begging for food. He got some scraps but only after enduring jeers and scoffings. Then he thought of another way of getting food for the orphans. The Directress of the orphanage was Sister Ursula Herman, a German, who knew the language perfectly. Matulaitis would take her as his translator and introduce her as "Schwester von Herman". The Germans, hearing the *von*, would raise their heads and listen more attentively, more politely, and they would provide them with food more quickly.

Countess Plater at times also came with material assistance. Her community of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart was not as poor and they had close ties with the wealthy parents of their students.

A primary school was organized next to the orphanage in order that the children might have a place to study. The youngsters from the area also attended the school. Some young girls would come to help the Sisters with the care of the orphans. It was brought to Matulaitis' attention that there was an active girls' handicraft society. He invited them to give courses in cutting and sewing. The girls' handicraft society was in reality a religious organization and Matulaitis helped them with their

religious rule. He presented the rule to the Archbishop and the group became a diocesan religious community. They were most grateful for this and continued to help restore the dilapidated monastery.

In addition to these problems, the question of the novitiate had to be considered. Before long Matulaitis had assembled a group of young priests and brothers and spent several hours a day instructing them in class. The rest of the day they spent rebuilding the old monastery. Matulaitis did not lag behind but labored with all his strength, despite his physical handicap. The young men returning for supper after a hard day's work would sometimes fall asleep at the supper table. It was exhausting work. They couldn't understand how their director was able to endure it, since he usually rose at 4:00 a.m. to attend to his daily affairs.

After a wearisome day Father Jurgis would sometimes go past the Camaldolese houses to relax on the banks of the Vistula River. The river flowed along the edge of the park just like the Šešupė River did back at Lūginė. In spring one could hear the nightingale sing its lovely tune—the way they would sing in the orchard at home. His thoughts returned to Lithuania as his reveries carried him back home. It had been many years now since he had returned home in the summer, but there was no time now for reveries and longings—*age, quod agis!*

Madame Radvilas was worried and most apprehensive. She suspected the Warsaw Curia of Polish chauvinism. They did not wish to serve the Lithuanians, she said. Bishop Ruškys begged Matulaitis to fulfill his promise. Matulaitis reasoned thus: it is easy to promise something in the name of the Lithuanian Marians, but what about the consequences? If circumstance should demand it, could he really replace one priest with another? To whom could he turn for advice? Especially now, when there was no communication with Lithuania! Nevertheless, he persuaded Rev. Kulvietis to accept the rector's position for the Lithuanians at the Radvilas church. This was to be at the end of the school year. After his acceptance, Matulaitis informed Bishop Ruškys. Then in July of 1915 Archbishop Kakowski issued formal papers handing over the church to the care of the Marians and appointing as rector the Rev. Leonas Kulvietis.

Matulaitis had rebuilt Bieliany and put the Polish Marians firmly on their course. The number of orphans increased under their care. In 1917 Princess Woronecka offered a house to the Marians on the condition that accommodations for orphan boys be made. Matulaitis appointed Reverend Lysik as Director of the new home for children. When the orphanage finally closed, the Marians made use of it for their own junior high school.

Matulaitis' relationship with the Lithuanians of Warsaw was friendly. He provided them with devotional services, gave sermons and conducted lenten retreats. Everyone knew him. The servant girls of Lithuanian origin working in the homes of the wealthy, on meeting him in the streets, would sometimes greet him in Polish. He would say to them: "Don't you know Lithuanian, or have you forgotten?" He kept a watchful eye on the Lithuanian girls who studied agriculture at the Plater school. He taught the Lithuanian language courses, attended their afternoon teas and reminded them of the necessity to treasure their Lithuanian heritage and to love their country. His words did make an impression on them. The girls saw the great respect given him by the teachers and by the Countess Plater. Due to his efforts, eight Lithuanian girls completed the agricultural institute of Chyliszky, returned to Lithuania entering a professional career. There were Lithuanian sisters also at the Sacred Heart Convent which he visited and where he heard confessions. He always reminded them that they must return to Lithuania to work there as soon as the opportunity occurred.

The Germans began to tire of the war. In their occupied lands of Lithuania and Poland, nationalist movements stirred a wave for the re-establishment of the independence of their countries. The Russians were already in the midst of a revolution. Matulaitis became very anxious now to return home. It had

been three and a half years since he had been detained in Poland. Perhaps this was necessary in order to help the Polish Marians reorganize, but he had begun his work of renewing the congregation in Marijampolė, and so far had not accomplished anything worthwhile there.

YOU CANNOT AVOID THE HEIGHTS!

"Once the affairs of the Marian Congregation were taken care of in Warsaw," writes Matulaitis, "I was free to go to Marijampolė for the reorganization of the Marian monastery... His Excellency, Pranas Karevičius, Bishop of Kaunas, obtained permission for me to travel. In those days it was difficult to get a traveling permit from the Germans. On March 1, 1918, I left Warsaw... traveling third class" (AJM, 195).

He arrived in Vilnius that evening and stopped over at the Dolorist Brothers' Monastery. "Having put away my things," he writes, " I had a quick meal and then went to see Monsignor Michalkevičius, the Administrator of the diocese of Vilnius. He asked me whether I had come to take over the diocese. At first, I did not understand the question. However, after an explanation, it became evident that there were definite rumors about my having been designated to become bishop of Vilnius" (ibid).

A CANDIDATE FOR BISHOP

Next morning Matulaitis left for Kaunas. "The city," he writes, "was deserted." The escapees[to Russia] had not returned as yet. There were German soldiers everywhere. All the signs were in German" (ibid). He conducted a retreat for the seminarians in Kaunas and two retreats for the people—one in Lithuanian and one in Polish.

During his visit with Bishop Karevičius, he learned that the Lithuanian Council, having declared the Independence of Lithuania on February 16, 1918, was now conducting the affairs of the State temporarily. The Council was striving to obtain a Lithuanian bishop for the capital city of Vilnius and had proposed to Rome Canon K. Olšauskas as its candidate. There was another candidate

who had the support of the deposed Bishop of Vilnius, Eduard von Ropp. This candidate also had the support of the Bishop of Kaunas. It became clear to Matulaitis that he himself was that candidate.

Matulaitis did not take this news seriously. Right now it was most important for him to hurry back to Marijampolė. Permission had to be obtained from a German, Altmann, who appeared to be polite and helpful. However, the following day he became very formal. The journey to Marijampolė required the approval of both bishops—of Kelce and of Seinai. Matulaitis tried to explain that for him, a religious, the permissioin of the Bishop of Kelce was unnecessary and as for the Bishop of Seinai, well, he knew the purpose of his journey—to re-establish the Marian Congregation. The Lithuanian Council, Altmann declared, would certainly not approve of this. Only on the third day did Altmann, after strong protests, grant permission for a fifteen-day visit. Should there be any necessity for a longer visit, the local German office could prolong the time.

On the way to Marijampolė, Matulaitis really began to worry about his candidacy for bishop. He reflected on the situation and became deeply convinced that only by this peaceful undertaking of re-establishing the Marians could he serve the Church and his people. God forbid that he be elevated to the bishop's see (ibid 196).

He had hardly stepped into his native town when requests from all directions poured in on him. First, he was asked to give a retreat, since it was Lent. "Here, I conducted a retreat for the students of the secondary school and for those at the teachers' college. Then, I preached a short retreat for the people. The situation of the Marians was indeed a difficult one" (ibid, 197). There were only two of them—Vincas Dvaranauskas and Justinas Navickas. They were in charge of the parish and "... there was a great amount of pastoral work to do, all organizational" (ibid). They were so busy that Matulaitis could not even have a proper conversation with them.

"Several secular priests lived at the monastery [chaplains of schools]. There were constant guests and gatherings. There was little free time" (ibid). The priests, on arriving there, wished to discuss their problems with him. The Curia of Seinai was disorganized because of the war, and the priests' seminary was not operating at all. They begged Matulaitis to act as mediator with the Germans to ask for permission to reopen the seminary. "You do, after all, speak their language. You've studied in the West and maybe they will listen to you." Permission was obtained, but on the condition that in the seminary all classes would be taught only in Latin and Lithuanian. The priests asked him

to be the Rector of the Seminary. "I positively refused," writes Matulaitis (ibid).

The people and the priests who had previously fled to Russia began to return. Some of them, came to spend a few days at the monastery. They wanted to speak with Matulaitis and seek his advice. A few of them were possible candidates for the Marians. Some of the students for whom he had conducted retreats also showed interest in joining the Congregation. Matulaitis was happy that, with God's help, a few more candidates were finally arriving. Accordingly, he restored community life to the monastery: all ate lunch and supper together, listened to spiritual readings during meals and discussed the Constitution among themselves. The secular priests who had lived in the monastery had left and returned to the city.

Matulaitis, now that he had returned to the directing of monastery affairs, began to prepare a set of instructions on the following: the manner in which the Marians were to conduct their life in common; specific tasks they would undertake; initial formation of candidates. Often he worked nights. He was also concerned with other plans which the war had interrupted, namely—the establishment of a religious community for Lithuanian women. He had already met two girls who were interested and had sent them, before the war, to Switzerland to complete their novitiate in Ingenbol with the Sisters of the Holy Cross. In Marijampolė,

he found six more who wished to enter the religious life. He began to prepare Constitutions for the Community. Since they had been written in Latin, Juozas Laukaitis, who was a language expert visiting in Marijampolė, translated them into Lithuanian. Matulaitis gave the new religious congregation the name of "The Sisters of the Poor," under the same formal title that he had chosen for the Marians, that is, "The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary." In the beginning there were eight sisters—two who had been in Switzerland and six new members from Marijampolė. He appointed Father Uogintas' sister, Petronelė, as Superior. Bishop Karosas of Seinai confirmed the Constitutions on October 15, 1918. This is the official date of the founding of the new religious Community.

While he was preparing the Constitutions for the Sisters, at the end of May, Matulaitis wrote a letter to Bishop Karevičius. "I constantly hear that your Excellency keeps proposing me for the bishopric of Vilnius. Thank you so much for your confidence in me... But, having lived awhile in Marijampolė and having weighed all things in the sight of God, I see that our Congregation is just at its beginning—and that everything must be put in good order—newly rebuilt. If I were to leave now, it would suffer a great loss... I have begun also to gather a Congregation of Sisters here in Marijampolė. Their Constitutions are almost completed.

Without me, the Congregation would have to be dissolved. The truth is, Lithuania needs religious Communities for both men and women. This is obvious to everyone... If I ever find myself in Vilnius, that den of quarrels, misunderstandings and feuds, my health would not last very long. I would die there without having accomplished anything. My health is poor, and I have been afflicted many times with tuberculosis."

A letter concerning the same subject was sent to Bishop Karevičius by Rev. J. Laukaitis, a former member of the Russian Duma (Parliament) and at present an influential Lithuanian activist. Visiting Marijampolė and having discussed matters with J. Matulaitis, he was convinced that this religious must be left in peace and not troubled with the bishopric. "It is absolutely necessary to have a person," writes Laukaitis to the Bishop, "who is capable of organizing and renewing religious life. The only man for this undertaking is Father Matulaitis who is our greatest expert in this field." For these reasons, Laukaitis proposed that some other candidate be selected for the bishopric of Vilnius.

Bishop Karevičius finally promised not to "push" the candidacy further but to leave it to God's providence.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL DELIBERATES

The members of the Lithuanian Council visited the Papal Nuncio Eugenio Pacelli in Munich twice

in order to solve the question of the new Bishop of Vilnius. During the second visit, the Nuncio informed them that if they insisted on upholding the previously profferred candidate (Canon Olšauskas), they would be wasting valuable time, since he would hardly be acceptable to the Apostolic See. The appointment to the diocese of Vilnius is vital and urgent; there can be no delay. If the Council has nothing against Matulaitis, then his appointment can be facilitated without any delay by a telegram message (AJM, 92).

The Council had its doubts. Some of the members reasoned that since Matulaitis had lived for such a long time in Poland, he could not be a very loyal Lithuanian. "It was quite a struggle for me," writes Justinas Staugaitis, the Council's vice-president, "before I finally convinced them that Matulaitis posed no danger to us" (ibid 89).

Before answering the Nuncio, the Council sent their delegates to Matulaitis in Marijampolė to ascertain what political inclinations and tactics he would employ if he were to be the Bishop of Vilnius, Matulaitis, as Bishop Juozas Kukta writes, answered thus:

"I see that you would want the next Bishop of Vilnius to be like a hammer to smash the heads of the Polish priests. I could not be such a person because the Canon Law of the Church states exactly just what should be the relationship between a bishop and his priests. I know beforehand that in

observing these laws, I could not favor one side nor the other" (ibid, 91-92).

After the delegates had left, Matulaitis himself set out for Vilnius to meet with Antanas Smetona. "I went to the President of the Council," he writes "to show that I, in remaining an ordinary religious, could do more good for the Church and the Lithuanian community, since Lithuania is in great need of religious orders" (ibid 197). He visited J. Staugaitis, the Vice-President of the Council, and in all sincerity requested that his candidacy be dropped. "I told him quite frankly—to be the Bishop of Vilnius is not a very easy task, but we do not have a better candidate" was the answer of Staugaitis (ibid 89).

The Germans still controlled Lithuania and it was a known fact that they were against a Polish candidate. They themselves had collected information on possible Lithuanian candidates in order that they might be able to hinder an unfavorable one. Matulaitis must have known something about this, for upon returning from Vilnius, he stopped at Kaunas and went to the German political office superior, Dr. Erich Zechlin, asking why his candidacy was still being proposed. He also sent a letter to Nuncio Pacelli in Munich, asking him "to allow me to work in Marijampolė" (ibid 197).

The Council finally decided in favor of Matulaitis and informed Nuncio Pacelli of their decision (ibid 92). At the same time the Germans decided

to remove Monsignor Michalkevičius from the position of administrator of the diocese. They exiled him to Germany. The incident was most unpleasant to the Lithuanian Council. They asked Matulaitis to inform the proper Church authorities that the Council had nothing to do with the exile of the administrator. Matulaitis performed this task and he writes briefly of his visit to the Nuncio: "I went to Munich but, alas, I carried back the impression that the Holy Father was not likely to pay attention to my profferred explanations" (ibid 197).

A SLEEPLESS NIGHT

The Lithuanian Council became aware of a problem: Matulaitis, even if nominated, could refuse the office of bishop. They sent two priests, Father Alfonsas Petrulis and Juozas Purickis, to persuade him not to object. They arrived in Marijampolė and after supper the three of them went to the monastery gardens to speak in privacy. Matulaitis listened attentively, but his face had a worried look. Finally he stated:

"What can I say! If Lithuania needs my sacrifice, I cannot refuse. However, I can assure you that you will be sending me to my perdition. I am not afraid of any danger, for I do not give much value to my own person. But I am afraid that my sacrifice will accomplish very little good" (ibid 200).

Matulaitis had already informed the Marians in Warsaw about his predicament. "The persistent rumors that I may be sent to Vilnius have begun to frighten me. Please be so kind as to ask His Excellency the Archbishop to extricate me. I would be most grateful... After all, I could hardly adjust myself to Vilnius. I am not sure whether an angel from heaven could please them all. It is a fact that if I go there, more than likely I shall be calumniated and trodden upon... How could I be expected to do any work there? Our religious congregations would suffer much. Therefore, I beg you to help me out of this misfortune."

On June 6th, he wrote a second time. "My candidacy for [the bishopric of] Vilnius has again been mentioned. The appointment would bring great harm to our Community. In Vilnius, I could not satisfy either the Poles or the Lithuanians or, for that matter, the White Russians. I would become the victim of political intrigue. Help me! Go to the Nuncio, the Archbishop, Bishop Przezdziecki and T. Ledóchowski. Write a letter to Fribourg. They too must understand that I cannot be appointed Bishop of Vilnius" (Diary, 1947).

The Marians of Warsaw went to see Achilles Ratti, the new Visitator to Poland and the Baltic countries. He had arrived in Warsaw on March 30, 1918. The Visitator received the Marians, listened to them and to their unwillingness to lose their General, and exclaimed: "That confirms it! We

have chosen wisely. Let this be a comfort to you all" (ibid).

The Visitator Achilles Ratti, the future Pope, now just a monsignor, received Matulaitis' letter written in Marijampolė. In it Matulaitis had enumerated objections already known to him and asked to be spared the appointment. An answer came in October by a messenger. Matulaitis tore open the letter and froze. He had been appointed Bishop. There was a postscript, that if he should try to resign, the Pope would not accept his resignation! That night, he said, he could not sleep. He felt hemmed in by the imposed burden.

CAUGHT IN A CROSSFIRE

The official announcement was sent by Msgr. Ratti on October 18th to the Vilnius Cathedral Chapter's Vicar, Msgr. Jan Hanusowicz. The Chapter thanked him on October 22nd and among other things stated: "The appointment of a Lithuanian bishop causes us great pain and puts us in an adverse frame of mind toward the Holy See." Among those who signed the statement were two priests from the Lithuanian parishes of the diocese of Vilnius, Jonas Ušyla (polonized version—Uszyllo) from Eišiškės, and Karolis Lubėnas (Lubianiec) from Rodūnė. The latter was the author of the statement.

The Visitator noticed the obvious disobedience to the Pope in the Chapter's statement and in his letter of November 12th he reacted strongly. He promised to speak to them personally on his visit to Vilnius. The Chapter was humiliated and tried to modify its position in a follow-up letter. Nevertheless, not long afterwards they did send their own delegate to greet the newly nominated bishop.

The news spread fast among the priests of Vilnius. When they gathered for their regular conferences, one became aware of the feeling of mutual satisfaction. Canon Juozas Kukta, a pastor of Vilnius, later Bishop of Kaišiadoriai, recalls that "one of the conference attendees publicly expressed his satisfaction with the appointment. Another priest answered him saying that he would soon regret the appointment because Matulaitis was so tactful that it was going to be hard for him to act indiscreetly.

The Lithuanian Council representatives came to Marijampolė to confer about the consecration and the installation ceremonies. They wanted Matulaitis to be consecrated in Vilnius, not in Kaunas and that the installation address be given in Lithuanian because this was required by Lithuania's interests as a governing state. "I replied," writes Matulaitis, "that I was appointed bishop not for the State but for the people, for the faithful and for the Church." Vilnius had a majority of Polish-speaking people thus it would only be right, reasoned Matu-

laitis, to speak first in their language.

On November 11th, Matulaitis received a telegram from the Apostolic Visitator, Achilles Ratti, urging him to have the consecration immediately and to occupy the diocese at once. Matulaitis had not yet received the Bull of appointment. He sent the Marian Father Vincas Dvaranauskas to bring it from Warsaw. Matulaitis made arrangements with Bishop Karevičius to have his consecration in Kaunas on December 8th.

Rev. V. Dvaranauskas returned without the Bull but had a document from the Visitator. This was dated November 2nd. It appears that the Bull of appointment had been prepared, but that its delivery from Rome took more time than expected. Ratti urged that the consecration should take place immediately without any further delay.

BISHOP JURGIS ON HIS KNEES

This reminder necessitated the cancellation of the scheduled date. The consecration was now set for an earlier date, that of December 1st. This left little time for last-minute arrangements. Two co-consecrators had to be invited—Antanas Karosas, Bishop of Seinai and Zigmund Lozinski, Bishop of Minsk. The latter could not get a train reservation soon enough to arrive in time and the former was in Lomža where he was consecrating the suffragan Jalbrzykowski. Thus it happened that there was

only one consecrator, Pranas Karevičius, Bishop of Kaunas. Two monsignors were to assist him, one from Vilnius and the other from the Seinai diocese.

In the sanctuary, the Reverend Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, editor of the *Lithuanian Echo* of Vilnius was seated among the many priests. He followed every move of the newly consecrated Bishop and was overcome with sadness:

"On his knees before the consecrating Bishop Karevičius, Bishop Jurgis seemed alone, very much alone... in the crowd of people" (Vaižgantas, Writings I, 1922, 139).

The ceremonies in the cathedral lasted three hours—from ten o'clock in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon. In the evening at six o'clock there was a dinner at the Seminary. There were many greetings, but the most memorable one that took everyone by surprise was given by the delegates from Prussian Lithuania. Bishop Jurgis spoke twice in Lithuanian, once in Polish and emphasized that it was not his person that was important. The Church, which cared for all equally, was most important. He himself was prepared to serve everyone without distinction. Christ died for all nations... Faith is a reality of life. It is encouraging to know that the *ad hoc* temporary government of Lithuania places such emphasis on religion. As for his own part, he promised to strive to fulfill his duties as bishop and as citizen of his country (ibid 142; AJM 131/132).

The Lithuanian temporary government felt that the victory was theirs, but it had not been achieved without effort. It had taken an entire year of hard work and planning. Of course, circumstances had been favorable. Vilnius had been too long without a bishop and the Vatican was anxious to rectify that situation. The candidate was exceptionally good. The government officials were soon convinced of that. It was their privilege to present the new bishop with the *insignia* of his office—the mitre, crosier and ring. The gifts given to Matulaitis by courtesy of the Lithuanian government were presented before the consecration.

THORNS IN VILNIUS

After the consecration Bishop Matulaitis did not return to Marijampolė but remained in Kaunas. He stayed a few days at Rev. Justinas Staugaitis' rectory. Here in relative peace, he was able to prepare for his installation and to write his speeches.

He recalled the words of Rev. Tumas-Vaižgantas spoken that evening after the consecration. Indeed, he had entered them in his diary because they accurately expressed his own ideas: "We have priests politicians, priests community workers and all kinds of other priests but we lack a Father—a shepherd. You be one, Bishop Jurgis!" But how should he present himself in order to be accepted as a Father?

INSTALLATION IN VILNIUS CATHEDRAL

On December 8th he went to the Kaunas railroad station and stood in line to purchase his ticket. He was fortunate to get a seat. There were no pri-

vate compartments available. As a result, he rode in the coach with all the other passengers. The travellers took no notice of him until the train arrived at the Lentvaris station where the local pastor and parishioners had come to greet the new Bishop.

At the Vilnius station, the representatives of the Chapter, the City, and the Lithuanian Council awaited him. There was no evidence of any counter-demonstration, but he was handed a letter from the Prime Minister, Augustinas Voldemaras. From the station all went to the Blessed Virgin Chapel "The Gate of Dawn," where the Bishop was asked to pray before the miraculous picture of Our Lady. Bishop Matulaitis stepped into the sacristy and read Voldemaras' letter. The Prime Minister asked that during the installation in the Cathedral he would speak to the White Russians in their language and after the installation, as he was being greeted, to permit the representatives of the Lithuanian Council and the Cabinet members to speak first. The Bishop related the contents of the letter to Monsignor Hanusowicz (Lith. version: Januševičius), administrator of the diocese.

"You are the hosts. I will not dispute your decision," said the Bishop. However, he asked all of them to make a special effort to be peaceful in order to avoid any unpleasantness.

As for the Lithuanian Council, Hanusowicz said: "If they strongly insist, perhaps they can

be allowed to speak first." Matulaitis was rather pleased with this and asked that it be done.

All the representatives escorted the Bishop from the Gate of Dawn Chapel to the Cathedral itself. It was eleven in the morning. Monsignor Michalkevičius met him at the door. He had returned from exile but had not resumed the leadership of the diocese. He gave the Bishop the relics of the patron saint of the Cathedral to kiss and greeted the Shepherd with a few brief words, then intoned the *Te Deum.* The Bishop, dressed in his liturgical robes, took his place under the canopy which was held aloft by six very tall seminarians whom the seminary authorities had chosen from among the Lithuanians.

The Cathedral bells were silent because the Germans had confiscated them, but the bells of all the other churches began to peal. The procession entered the Cathedral, which was so crowded with people that they overflowed into the streets. The Bishop stopped at the Chapel of St. Casimir, the patron saint of Lithuania, to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Then the procession continued on to the presbytery.

The Lithuanian Council and Members of the Cabinet were absent because the Chapter had not assigned them a proper place.

Matulaitis left the procession and quietly ascended the bishop's throne. Now the members of the Chapter came one by one before him to pledge

him their homage and loyalty. Monsignor Hanusowicz was to have read the Papal Bull but it had not arrived from Rome yet. Instead he read a letter from the Apostolic Visitator, Achilles Ratti, in Latin, Polish and Lithuanian. A translation had been prepared in White Russian but was not read.

Then it was the Bishop's turn to speak. The Bishop greeted the faithful in Polish. The congregation responded loudly: for ever and ever." The speech of the Bishop was interrupted several times by Polish acclamations of "Long live our Bishop." After the speech, the Bishop waited for the Master of Ceremonies to read the Gospel in Lithuanian, but the latter insisted that this was not the custom. The Shepherd again greeted the people, this time in Lithuanian, and they loudly responded "for ever and ever" in Lithuanian. He then continued to speak to them in Lithuanian.

The two speeches were the same and lasted equally long. First, he introduced himself as the Shepherd of the Diocese, appointed by His Holiness, the Pope. Then he asked them to look on him as the servant of Christ who had been entrusted with the teaching of truth and morals.

"I will endeavor to be a Father and a friend... I will be a friend to the little children... I will be a friend to the poor and the unfortunate. I will comfort the weary, urge the rich to share with others... I will not reject anyone... I will strive to make love prevail so that there will be no quarrels,

hatred, injustice... I wish to forgive those who hate, to be a support to the weak, a shelter for the good... Trust me! Open your hearts to me" (AJM, 203).

The installation lasted an hour and a half. Then, the celebration of the Mass began.

RECEPTION IN THE BISHOP'S RESIDENCE

After Mass the Bishop was escorted to his residence. Here he was greeted with the traditional bread and salt, and then, as he had not as yet eaten, he went to another room for a small lunch. Canon J. Kukta came in and asked for a reply to Voldemaras' letter. The Bishop reminded him of Hanusowicz's advice, and Kukta ordered a driver to bring the representatives of the Lithuanian Council to the palace. As the Bishop ate, Canon Lubeniec entered and announced that the first ones to greet the Bishop would be the Polish delegates, since they were in the majority. Matulaitis folded his hands and said: "This is a matter of civil courtesy. In church I spoke first in Polish, then in Lithuanian, because the Poles were more numerous. Now the Council is, after all, the government here. Even the Holy Father greeted it, and Nuncio Pacelli negotiated with it in Munich. The Germans have given the Council a measure of governmental power and it represents a great section of the country.

Therefore, as a gesture of civil courtesy, it would be proper to receive it first" (Diary, 1918.XII.8).

The individual greetings were begun by the Poles and they were numerous. In the name of the Lithuanians there were greetings from 44 delegations representing Vilnius' Lithuanian societies, the press, the schools and other institutions. The Poles simply extended greetings to him, but the Lithuanians brought gifts. "The Bishop was greeted by representatives of several White Russian groups," reported *Free Lithuania.* The White Russians spoke clearly and with emotional sincerity, vehemently listing the injustices committed by the Diocese of Vilnius against their countrymen. They expressed the firm hope that the new Bishop would correct the injustices and restore the White Russian language to its proper place in the Church. The Bishop responded to all in Polish and Lithuanian. He replied to the White Russians also but had to make use of the Polish language. He apologized for not knowing their language and promised to learn it soon" (ibid).

Matulaitis spoke sincerely and urged that in negotiations with other nations all would maintain the Christian principles of morality, which forbade one to hate, despise or harm others. For his own part, he promised to love everyone equally.

"I do not know," he writes in his diary after the ceremonies, "why these national quarrels, animosities and stubbornnes never seemed so petty

and worthless as now. It was clear that with good will and willingness to compromise, it was possible to unite all in Christ. It seems that the fault could be attributed to some priests. After all, I have myself just recently experienced how much the Polish Chapter and the Polish priests completely disregard the Lithuanian Council and the Lithuanian national government."

A VISIT TO THE LITHUANIAN COUNCIL

The following day Matulaitis paid a visit to the Lithuanian Council. The visit was a formal one. The Bishop had sought for more friendly contact. He felt no guilt for what had happened at the installation, but the Lithuanian Council felt being wronged. They cancelled a scheduled banquet and wrote to the Chapter about the insult at the installation.

During the next few days the Bishop made visits to the various institutions of Vilnius and to some of the important people (ibid 133).

On the fourth day he was invited to a dinner arranged by the Lithuanian Council. The Council's reception smoothed over the trouble caused at the time of the installation.. Matulaitis was happy to have been able to make amends. He writes: "God helped me to come to terms with the Lithuanian government. The Lithuanians, upset by the installation, were suspicious as to what kind of Lithu-

anian I might be. Now they were reassured" (Diary, 1918.XII.12).

Rev. Tumas, had his own view on this point: "Bishop Jurgis began to rule his Diocese in Polish, not in Lithuanian or White Russian as the Lithuanian government had wished. Indeed, during his entire episcopate he was never especially noted for his Lithuanian patriotism. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian priests (the rams) and the people (the sheep) felt that the Shepherd was one of their own. They sensed the heart of a father, not the cold heart of a bureaucrat" (AJM 134).

ANXIETY OVER THE ADVANCE OF THE BOLSHEVIKS

The army of the Bolsheviks was approaching Vilnius. It was obvious to all that it was out to conquer the Baltic countries. What tactics should be adopted? How could certain administrative objectives be co-ordinated? Matulaitis hastened to share the results of a bishops' conference with the priests of Vilnius. That same evening he invited them to his residence and gave them the particulars on what they should do when the Bolsheviks entered the city. In their sermons, they were to preach the Word of God in a positive way, avoiding political involvements which might prove to be offensive.

On the third day, the city was in a state of

confusion. Besides the Lithuanian Council and the secret Polish Council, there was now the Workers' (Bolshevik) Council. The German army began to crumble. The various political groups began to compete among themselves in seizing the German weapons in order to take over the government of the city.

The Bishop was preparing for the Christmas holy days. On Christmas Eve, he visited orphanages and institutions and shared the Christmas wafers with them. He then celebrated midnight Mass and delivered a sermon. After Christmas, Stephan Mickiewicz from Warsaw arrived and announced himself as the government's Commissar. The purpose of the visit seemed strange to the Bishop. It was to inform him that the authorities in Warsaw had decided to occupy Lithuania and allow her to choose whether or not she wished to unite with Poland. A few days later, the Bishop received a telegram from Berlin. Dr. Juozas Purickis informed him that the Germans would never give Vilnius to the Bolsheviks or to the Poles. The Bishop forwarded the telegram to the Lithuanian Council and was surprised to see that the Germans were apparently withdrawing from the city.

On New Year's day, he celebrated Mass and preached. He took note that the Germans were completely absent. As he glanced over to the Gediminas Hill, he saw that, instead of the German flag, the Lithuanian tri-color was flying. Later, he

learned that the Germans had disappeared early in the morning, after having removed their flag. The Lithuanians hurried to put up their own flag and surrounded it with a seven man guard.

Soon Polish Legionnaires took over the city government. They proclaimed a state of war and marched on to the Bolshevik Council headquarters in Varnai Street. They surrounded the place and demanded surrender. The Bolsheviks barricaded themselves in the building and prepared to defend themselves. The battle was a holocaust. Only a few Bolsheviks survived. Then, these Legionnaires arrested the Jews and searched the homes of the Lithuanians and of the White Russians.

The Lithuanian Council and the Lithuanian government now had no alternative but to flee to Kaunas. There remained only one representative of the Lithuanian government—Mykolas Biržiška. The Bishop wrote in his diary on the first night of the take-over: "It is my opinion that the Legionnaires will not be able to hold Vilnius. Their killings are useless and their arrests only angered the opposing parties." As for the Germans: "German politics are incomprehensible: They incited everyone and then withdrew with everything."

Five days later, on the eve of the feast of the Epiphany, the Legionnaires disappeared. Matulaitis writes again: "They aroused and angered the Jews, the Lithuanians and the White Russians but most of all—the Bolsheviks. This can only bring on the

revenge of the Bolsheviks and retaliation upon innocent people... Most regrettable is the fact that many Polish priests had meddled in this affair. It could be said that they are the ones who formed the Legions and gave them birth. The landowners could not have accomplished anything without the help of the priests. There is nothing worse than for a priest to meddle in politics... He [the priest] cannot be a party member, much less take part in a conspiracy. God grant that this breed of priest politicians will vanish from our beloved Church..."

THE BRIGHTER MOMENTS

The first month of his episcopate was full of surprises and hardships. The Bishop had no time to worry about his own safety. It was most encouraging that, at the very beginning, two Marians, Father Kazimieras Reklaitis and Vincas Dvaranauskas, had come from Marijampolė to help him get settled. The Superior of the Sisters of the Poor, Sr. Petronelė, also came to do some chores, to straighten up the place. "The local Polish people apparently were unwilling to help" (Diary 1919 I, 5). Canon Juozas Kukta, the Pastor of All Saints parish, was of great assistance: "He provided me and my house with the necessary household items, farm implements and what he did not have, he bought. He supplied all the necessities of life and showed a true fraternal heart" (ibid).

On Christmas day, Rev. Juozas Vaitkevičius arrived unexpectedly. He had completed his studies at the Warsaw Seminary and in 1911-1912 he was in the Marian Novitiate in Fribourg. He earned his Doctorate at the University there. During the war, he was a professor at the Wloclawk Seminary in Poland and now he wished to return to the Lithuanian Marians. He arrived at the Bishop's residence and became, unofficially, his secretary.

The Bishop also needed a servant but wondered where he might find a suitable and trustworthy servant in Vilnius where conditions were less than favorable. As it happened, Andrius Meciūnas, the Director of the largest Lithuanian boys' orphanage, came to visit him. He spoke to the Bishop about Lithuanian affairs in his native parish of Rodūnė. Matulaitis recalled that he needed a person knowledgeable in the local languages and customs. " 'Rumors have reached me lately that you want to enter the Marian Congregation. This is a fine opportunity to do so. If not, then perhaps you would be willing to stay with me awhile?' I agreed and quickly moved into the Bishop's residence," writes Meciūnas (AJM 139). The quick-witted youth became the Bishop's right hand. He was sent everywhere; he served at Mass and at table; he escorted the Bishop to devotions held in the Cathedral. He was also sent to the Curia with business matters and he accompanied the Bishop on his walks up Gediminas Hill or to the gardens of the Bernar-

dines. He was receptionist at the Bishop's residence.

The Bishop had many visitors. One of those who often arrived unexpectedly and was always welcome was the Rev. Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas. "Bishop Jurgis," he writes "was easily approachable because he was always at home and held to no special etiquette. Whoever wished to see him simply knocked on the door and he would be escorted not to the official rooms but to his private office which was quite simple. And no official secretary was there... I had frequent opportunities to disturb the Bishop's peace with my novel and rather wild ideas or with my original interpretation of current events. The Bishop was always patient and gracious with me, but would also speak his mind frankly."

MUTUAL ADMIRATION

Another unexpected visitor who started to pay more frequent calls on the Bishop was the German war chaplain, Friedrich Muckermann, a Jesuit and a writer and preacher, then about 35 years old. He writes: "In addition to the matters that pertain directly to my duties as Chaplain, we found ourselves bound by very friendly ties. The Bishop was a religious and because of this special vocation, he became like a relative to me. Since I am a son of the Society of Jesus, I remember even today his powerful character as a religious. From the very beginning I noted that this Bishop wished to live as he

had done in the monastery, as an ordinary priest, despite his office. One can very readily recognize in a person whether his religiosity is genuine or not. It soon becomes evident whether he is a true ascetic. I formed this opinion of the Bishop the very first time I met him. True virtue is always pleasing and attractive and I could not help respecting and admiring him."

"He told me many things about his own congregation... We compared our rules with those of other religious. This is common talk with people who belong to different religious orders... I must admit that our conversations never touched on petty things... With such a person so totally and deeply imbued with the spirit of faith, even under the most difficult of circumstances, you can speak about the most pertinent of matters."

"At that time in Vilnius, nationalistic conflicts played a very important role. Anyone living there could hardly avoid arguments or misunderstandings. With Bishop Matulaitis one could speak frankly about everything, because he looked at all things from a calm perspective. He was interested in saving souls. He knew well the role of the priest in such a task. He was already living in an atmosphere of the heavenly communion of saints where many peoples from many nations worship the Lord God in harmony..."

"One day I noticed that the Bishop was studying the White Russian language. He did this so

that he could better serve these people. It was a great cause of pain to him that many were not sensitive to this need. . ."

"I must mention that Bishop Matulaitis' personality appealed to me and to the other Germans living at that time in Vilnius. War inevitably divides people. Yet, this is the time when everyone seeks comfort and lasting peace. How painful it is to realize that it is almost impossible to reconcile warring nations."

"The peace of God reigned in Bishop Matulaitis' heart, as God's sun shines down on all peoples. It was the breath of faith, the spirit of love that abided in him. This is how we saw him. For this we honored him.

A HIDDEN RESERVOIR OF STRENGTH

On the feast of the Epiphany, the Bishop was up at five o'clock in the morning as was his custom. He glanced out of the window at the dimly lighted streets where women were hurrying by to attend early Mass. Down the middle of the road marched one group of soldiers, followed by another. It was the Red Army. Some of the soldiers were pulling sleds piled with ammunition.

The Bishop went to his chapel to pray and lingered there.

"It will be as God wishes," he had said the previous evening to those who advised him to leave the city. "Death can find you anywhere. The road to heaven is the same no matter where you are."

He returned to the house and looked out of the window again. The soldiers, weary and poorly

dressed, were still marching past the house. A group of the poorer city folk watched them.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN POWER

The Germans had kept their food supplies in huge warehouses and, before withdrawing, they sold everything at half price. The Lithuanians had purchased the food for their orphanages, boarding schools and asylums. Unfortunately, the Red Army soldiers found the food, took it and sold it for liquor. Rev. Tumas ran to the Bishop. What ought to be done? The Bishop was aware of the situation: if the drunken soldiers were not restrained, the new rulers would have considerable problems. It would be to their advantage if the matter were taken care of at once. Rev. Tumas grabbed his hat and went to Kapsukas, then to Revkom. The soldiers immediately stopped their disorderly conduct (ib).

The new city rulers ordered the rectories to be seized and given over to the immigrants who had followed the Red Army into the city. No exception was made for the Bishop's residence. It was overcrowded with people. This encroachment, according to Rev. Tumas, became intolerable and inconvenient for all. "I was allowed two special audiences with Kapsukas to confer about this situation and the people were removed from the reception hall" (ibid).

The next surprise was the Appropriation Decree of Church Property. Bishop Matulaitis writes: "This Decree gave me much concern. I began to read everything possible on the subject: Church Laws and their various interpretations, also explanations concerning Church property and wealth in order to be more familiar with the spirit and ideas of the Church. I conferred with the members of the Chapter and with those who had experienced the communistic revolution in Russia."

Matulaitis hired a lawyer, Tadeusz Wróblewski, and asked him to prepare a plan of defense for the churches and church property. The lawyer prepared a Brief of Complaint and the Bishop invited the more prominent priests to study it. Church property, according to the Brief, was the property of the parish council and no priest was involved in ownership. Otherwise, the Bolsheviks would never recognize the parish councils. However, this procedure, without the consent of Rome, was forbidden by Canon Law and after conferring with the priests, the Bishop refused to approve the Brief. He privately ordered the priests to establish committees, however, for the defense of Church property. "We shall see what the future brings!" he said. "It is fortunate that this Decree has not been as yet put into effect" (Diary, 170-171).

The new Decree also covered the expulsion of religion and of the chaplains from the schools.

The Bishop had long ago taught and now repeated the following principles and conditions: that parents have the right and duty to demand that religion be taught to their children. Everything must be done to retain religion in the schools, but if forced out by law, what, indeed, can one do? If the Bolshevik-controlled schools undermine the faith of the children, it is understood that the parents cannot allow the children to attend such schools. The Bishop promised to issue a pastoral letter, if necessary. In this letter, he would indicate the school to which, with a clear conscience, the parents might send their children (ibid 17-173).

The Bishop was very perturbed about the situation. He writes that he prayed very often for the danger to pass. "Our Church had suffered so much under the Czar and now these new trials. And all this in the name of freedom of conscience. Oh God! What a strange world this is! . . These very same people who had recently fought against censorship, the restriction of the freedom of the press, now forbid newspapers of opposite view... These people who so strongly demanded freedom of gatherings and meetings, and freedom of speech, now do not allow a person of opposing views to even open his mouth. Before this, they had demanded equal rights for all. Now, they allow these rights only to members of their own party. Truly, to engage in politics is a very dangerous thing. How often politics seem to be governed only by the law of brute strength."

At the request of the Bishop, Father Muckermann remained in Vilnius. He learned Polish and held devotions in St. Casimir's Church.

In Vilnius, Father Muckermann now gained prominence through his sermons and was greatly admired. The people were drawn to the church itself, which had been inaccessible to them since the Russians had seized it. In addition to the customary devotions, the Jesuit, after conferring with the Bishop, started religious conferences for the workers. These gathered in such large numbers, that it was decided to have them organized into a union. The union soon had 9,000 members, composed of the various nationalities in Vilnius.

In Vilnius, there was another workers' organization which was under the influence of the Polish Endeks and headed by the Rev. Olszanski. The latter began to complain that the Jesuit was giving him too much competition. The Bishop invited both to see him and advised that Olszanski not forbid his members to attend Muckermann's conferences while the latter was asked to encourage his members to join Olszanski's organization if they wished to do so. Thus, the conflict was resolved.

The Bolsheviks at first did not realize what was going on. However, they became concerned when they learned that the Jesuits had founded a

Workers' Co-operative for the distribution of food and other necessities. Once this was organized, the association decided to print its own newspaper. The Bolsheviks promptly confiscated the first issue and ordered Muckermann to leave Vilnius in 24 hours.

It was Sunday and the workers as usual had gathered for church services. Muckermann was present. When he informed them that he had to leave on the command of the government, the workers would not let him go. More and more workers gathered. The militia men tried to disperse the crowd by firing a few shots at the church windows. The crowd became incensed, disarmed the militia men and handed them over to the Red Army soldiers. The Bolsheviks, fearful now of a violent disturbance, removed all the militia men from the area and replaced them with Red Army personnel.

The church was surrounded by the army for three days. The workers remained in the church and would not leave. The women slipped in and out to bring them food. Finally, the Bolsheviks lost patience. On February 12th, they cut the electric line, forced their way into the church and began to shoot at the ceiling. This scattered the people and Muckermann was captured. A number of the workers were arrested also and locked up in the Lukiškis prison. The church was locked and guards posted. The workers' headquarters were wrecked.

The Bishop sent another letter to Kapsukas through Rev. Tumas. He asked that the keys of the Church of St. Casimir be returned so that the people might not be hindered from praying and also that Muckermann and the arrested workers be released. Mickevičius replied by letter that he would honor all requests except the release of Muckermann. The Jesuit priest had already been imprisoned in Minsk where he was to await trial for treason.

Now the Bishop sat down to write a pastoral letter to the faithful: "It is my duty as your Shepherd to speak to you in a few sincere words regarding the events of the past few days... You, the working people, have the right to organize into unions, to demand and seek better working conditions in order to live a life that you can enjoy as men and as Christians. You have the right to invite for your instructions those people who are suitable and whom you can trust. As Catholics, you have the right to demand freedom of conscience and that of your convictions; that your faith be honored; that your churches be held sacred and not abused. You have the right and the duty to demand that your children be given the opportunity to be educated in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic faith and that religion shall not be excluded from the schools. You have the right and the duty to defend your Church."

He reminded them of the days of the former Czar when "we were deprived of our churches," and how this persecution strengthened the courage of the Catholics to defend their faith. In the present circumstances the Bishop has confidence that the Catholic people will courageously uphold their faith and will remain loyal to it.

In the second part of his letter, the Bishop reminded them that in fighting "for their rights and convictions" they were not to overlook the spirit of Christ. The weapons of Christ were the power of the spirit, sacrifice, suffering and love. "Let no one upset your patience. Do not allow yourselves to be provoked. Be careful not to be pushed into unbecoming, unchristian and anti-catholic behavior."

In the third section of his letter the Bishop spoke to those "who are not Christians, and those who are of opposing views. You must honor our religious convictions and our sacred churches. You must grant true freedom to our faith and our churches, our unions, our Catholic Action groups. Urge your friends of the same faith and your adherents to collaborate toward a common peace and friendship so that all citizens can live together in harmony. . ." (AJM 204-206).

Before he made his letter public, the Bishop conferred with some of his priests and asked them for their opinions. The letter, written on February 16th, was secretely printed in both Lithuanian and

Polish and delivered to the priests to be read from the pulpit on Sunday. That very same Sunday the Bishop was prepared to speak on this subject in the Cathedral, but the priests and laymen convinced him against it. The Bolsheviks would certainly arrest him for such a talk. Yet it seemed to Matulaitis "that when there is danger, the Bishop should not hide behind others. He must take a stand himself" (Diary, 1919.II.16).

The people, as if anticipating something unusual that Sunday, filled not only the Cathedral but also the square outside. There was a crowd of several thousand. And the Bishop did speak out. "Although he did not mention the Bolsheviks by name, he spoke directly about them, sharply and courageously exposing the evil and fraud of their doctrines" (ibid).

He returned from the Cathedral with a definite feeling that this would bring about his arrest. He put in order the more important things and, in writing, he appointed the person who was to rule the Diocese in the event of his arrest and another — to look after the Marian Congregation. The written authorization papers he entrusted to Rev. J. Vaitkevičius to keep in a safe place. This done, he wrote:

"Once the battle had begun, I felt as if a new force, a new power had enveloped me. I felt that I had been reborn. An overwhelming desire took hold of me to defend our beloved Church, to suf-

fer for it and to dedicate myself totally to her" (ibid).

The workers travelled to Minsk requesting the release of Father Muckermann. Bishop Matulaitis wrote to Bishop Lozinski of Minsk asking him to help the prisoner. He was informed that the prisoner had been provided with food. Two weeks later, on March 2nd, the Bolsheviks released a group of the arrested workers. The others were retained for further questioning. Muckermann was freed much later. He returned to Germany and through his writings, speeches and sermons started a spiritual revival movement among the educated people. However, due to the threat of the Nazis in 1937, he had to leave his own country for Switzerland.

AN ATTEMPT TO SUBDUE THE LITHUANIANS

The Bolsheviks began to arrest people in Lithuania as soon as they set foot in that country. The Bishop saw to it that the prisoners did receive food and that the priests had the means to celebrate Mass.

It seemed that the arrests would never stop. One day, the Seminary Professor M. Reinys and the Cathedral curate P. Bieliauskas hurried over to see the Bishop. They asked what they should do since the Bolsheviks were looking for them. Should they flee or should they stay?

"Do what is proper. In your place I would never run," he said.

Next day both were arrested.

The Bishop became worried that Rev. Tumas might have been arrested as well. It was several days now since he had been seen. One morning, just before Mass, he received a note from Rev. Tumas asking him to bring the sacraments.

After Mass, Matulaitis hurried over to the patient. He was holding his head because the fever was high. The Bishop heard his confession and prepared to give him Holy Communion.

The Bishop was sorry for the sick priest, but even more for the bleeding nation. The revolutionary government was composed mostly of native Lithuanians and here they were choking the idea of freedom for which their own countrymen were fighting. Nearly half of Lithuania was in their hands and they were advancing into Kaunas. On February 20th, Moscow proclaimed the "Lithuanian-Byelorussian Soviet Republic." Moscow had for such a long time enslaved, subjugated and mutilated our country's spirit. God, when would it all end!?

ATTACKS AGAINST THE BISHOP

On February 15th, the Bishop was vehemently berated by some of the speakers at one of the workers' meetings. The workers reacted by shouting down the opposition and not allowing them to

speak against the Bishop. Of course, they will get nowhere by using such tactics, reasoned Matulaitis. "This is not the way to influence the workers, by threatening me." Shortly afterward, certain suspicious-looking men bearing recommendations from "trustworthy persons" began to visit the Bishop. They offered him various suggestions: that he allow priests dressed in secular clothes to disrupt the Bolshevik meetings; that he secretly invite the Jesuits to Vilnius; that he should take steps to ransom the imprisoned priests. The Bishop considered how best to deal with these "messengers"—to usher them out without much ado, or to listen to them politely and speak with them. He decided in favor of the latter course. "May these good people discover how things stand, directly from me, the original source... Perhaps they will quiet down sooner" (Diary 1919. III.3).

The Bolsheviks had no reason to arrest the Bishop. When provoked, he did not retaliate; when threatened, he did not become alarmed. It was a good thing that the poor people of the city were on his side. They watched his every move, conducting him to the Cathedral and escorting him back to his residence. During Lent, after vespers in the Cathedral, he began a series of sermons on the Passion of Christ. The people gathered in large numbers. The Bolsheviks sent their own observers to check whether the Bishop would attack the government.

In the first sermon he quoted Isaiah's words of lament: " 'All you who pass by, stop and see, if there is any suffering greater than mine.' The passion of Christ is the greatest suffering because it takes upon itself all the people's sins and infirmities. We also suffer both in body and soul, especially now, during these days of conflict. Suffering, it is true, oppresses us, but it also cleanses our spirits and our souls."

" Are we not the beloved creatures of God? God, who gave us a part of Himself in our immortal souls? Are we going to allow our souls to perish through lack of penance and of sorrows for our sins, thus increasing the tremendous sufferings of Christ?"

The people listened with great attention, bent their heads, and the Bishop returned to the altar and blessed them with the monstrance.

Each Sunday, more and more people attended the services so that it became necessary to open the doors of the church for those outside to hear him. The words of the Bishop acted like balsam, words spoken so calmly and with such sincerity. There was nothing objectionable in them. Every Sunday, the Bishop was escorted to the Cathedral by his servant, Andrius Meciūnas.

After the second Lenten sermon, a definite concern began to grow and deepen in him. The Bishop wrote a letter to the Apostolic Visitator in Warsaw. He explained the situation and requested

special authorization to decide in certain matters without permission from Rome in case means of communication become suspended. He entrusted the letter to a messenger and on March 19th he received "very broad authorization for himself and the neighboring Bishops."

The same day, he received an order from the government to evacuate his living quarters within three days. He decided not to leave. Let them force him out. The news reached the city and the people became alarmed. Groups of the poor and workers began to assemble. The Bishop was afraid that they would start a protest demonstration and that more arrests would follow. He sent Mrs. E. Vileišis to speak to Kapsukas. On the fourth day, March 22nd, Kapsukas recalled the order.

The following night, at two o'clock in the morning, the Bolsheviks themselves attempted entry into the Bishop's quarters but the guard kept them out. On March 30th, the order to move out was again given because a Commissar from Russia was arriving. The Bishop celebrated Mass in his private Chapel and heard shouting outside the house. The infuriated people guarded the house and shouted abuse at the arriving Commissar. The Bishop went out to calm the people and advised them that it would be better to appeal to the government.

Reacting to the protest, the Commissar temporarily withdrew, but he returned again that afternoon. Again the crowd reassembled. This continued

until April 2nd when the Commissar got into his automobile, drove away, and was never seen again. The next day, the Bolsheviks arrested on the street the Bishop's servant, Andrius Meciūnas, and imprisoned him. A student, Jonas Jusionis, who later became a medical doctor, was befriended and protected by Meciūnas. Jusionis had been one of the organizers of a strike against the Bolsheviks, who had been trying to infiltrate and influence a boarding school for Lithuanian students. He now took on the duties of Andrius Meciūnas. The Bishop discovered that Jusionis spoke the White Russian language and began to converse with him; "...he made good progress in learning that language" (AJM 184).

A BISHOP FOR ALL

Since the Bishop had promised to learn the White Russian language, he began to study it with the help of his tutor. He knew very well that the language was considered to be the language of the despised and neglected people. The Russians maintained that it was one of their many dialects; the Poles—that it was the language of the Orthodox, as Lithuanian was that of the pagans. The priests would not permit it to be used in their churches. Thus, there were no sermons or catechesis for these people. No one was allowed to use this language in the confessional.

Bishop Matulaitis knew all these facts. He also knew of the disastrous results. The White Russian people knew little catechism and had never learned to make their confession properly.

The Bishop, however, did not know that the White Russian priests, industrious and conscientious as they were, were about to spread their wings and leave their people. One of them came to him for permission to transfer to the Minsk diocese.

"Why do you want to go?" the Bishop asked.

"I want to work with my own people."

"But why can't you do this here in our diocese?"

"It is impossible."

The priest related these hard facts to the Bishop. If you dare to serve the people using the White Russian language, the other priests persecute you... It is all very different in the Minsk Diocese, for there Bishop Lozinski himself delivers sermons in White Russian and encourages priests to uphold the White Russian language and culture.

"I am very much in favor of the restoration of the White Russian language and I will not object to its usage at all," spoke Matulaitis, "but I insist that this be done under the banner of Catholicism so that the reviving nation may develop a deeper religious life."

The conversation went well and he continued.

"It is good that the White Russians are awakening and reviving. If the priests and the Catholics do not direct the movement into the right tracks,

then it will take a different direction and oppose the Church."

"The priests cannot abandon their people. Their duty is to strengthen the people's spirit. Also, they must remember their own spiritual needs. Monasteries and religious houses for both men and women are needed. These would benefit the White Russians immensely." The Bishop promised to be of help especially in this matter. "The priests must be concerned also with those who had been Uniates or Orthodox members. The best way to reach all the people is to preach the Word of God in the White Russian language."

The other White Russian priests were not quite certain as yet what the Bishop had in mind. On visits or casual encounters they would inquire whether they were allowed to teach the children catechism in the White Russian language.

"I can't see how it can be done otherwise," the Bishop would answer.

"What about the sermons where the parishes are of mixed nationalities? Which language are we to use, Polish or White Russian?"

"Preach to the White Russians in their own language and to the Poles in theirs, but be careful not to cause any disturbances."

On March 13th, three men arrived from the Druja parish to see him. They were ordinary lay people. They said they had a chapel in Idolta and were ready to build a rectory. They would like a

priest and a separate parish. One visitor spoke for all in broken Polish. The Bishop asked him to speak "po prostu" in White Russian.

The attitude of the men changed immediately. Their faces lit up. They became very talkative, happy and courageous. The Bishop wanted to know all about their hardships and misfortunes... He reminded them to be proud of their language because it was given to them by God, just as the Russian, Polish and Lithuanian languages had been given to those peoples... The men left, feeling much happier.

THE QUESTION OF TRAINING PRIESTS

Once a Polish priest visited the Bishop and related the situation at the Seminary. According to him, it was the fault of the Seminary which was promoting Polish nationalism. The directors of the Seminary and, very particularly, the Inspector believe that the Lithuanian and White Russian nationalistic movements are a threat to Catholicism. And he went on: "The seminarians are aware of this attitude, and so they try to hide their nationality. This demoralizes them and later many of them tend to become chauvinistic. It would be better to allow all the nationalities to express themselves freely, for all equally deserve to be respected and protected." As for language, all the seminarians ought to learn Lithuanian and White Russian.

"I do not expect all that," the Bishop replied. "It is more important to me that a priest, on leaving the Seminary, should have the spirit of a true Catholic apostle prepared to serve his flock without prejudice. Then he will be willing to learn whatever language is needed. What is the use of priests who know several languages when they use them to further their own political interests or for the good of their party, rather than for the good of the people and for the salvation of souls?" (ibid 199).

Bishop Matulaitis began to visit the Seminary. "On February 24th, I observed the first two classes, namely—Sacred Scripture and Moral Theology. The Professors, it was obvious, insisted on teaching and questioning only in Polish, yet, I saw that the textbooks were printed in Latin" (ibid 204). "On March 8th, I attended the lectures at the Seminary. I noticed that some of the Professors were late for class and some left early without finishing their lecture, others were not even there" (ibid). From March 10th to the 22nd, I looked in on the Seminary courses, with a few interruptions for my daily tasks. I noticed that some professors taught without being prepared for their class. The professor teaching Canon Law simply translated the Codex into Polish. The Church history professor's presentation was heavy and boring, but he was most adept in questioning the seminarians" (ibid 205-205).

The Bishop's visits prompted the professors to

correct their faults—to arrive on time and to prepare for their classes, even though he had not offered one word of rebuke to them.

"My greatest concern was gradually to build up a strong Seminary, and especially, to make it a Catholic one, after having cleared away all kinds of chauvinistic and nationalistic excesses. My greatest wish was that once the seminarians had completed their studies, they would leave with apostolic and priestly hearts and spirits, willing to serve people of all nations without distinction as St. Paul had done."

On March 25th, the Bishop interviewed each seminarian individually. These complained that they were forbidden to speak with each other in their own language—in White Russian or Lithuanian. The Bishop replied briefly to their complaints: "I will not discriminate against anyone because of his nationality or language" (ibid 201).

He requested the superiors to send him one senior seminarian every day to serve his morning Mass.

A few of them, after having met the Bishop, were most pleased that the Shepherd respected everyone regardless of national origin and language.

OFFERS TO HELP THE BISHOP

A few days passed. The servant, Andrius Meciūnas, escorted into the Bishop's office an unfa-

miliar person who introduced himself as Dybowski, the appointed Commander of the Warsaw government in Vilnius. The Bolsheviks, according to his information, would soon leave Vilnius and it was his duty at that time to protect the people and to maintain order.

The Bishop asked him whether he had spoken with the Lithuanians. Mr. Dybowski answered that he was unable to reach any agreement with them. Why had he come here then? To oversee the personal safety of the Bishop, since he had informationtion that, as they withdrew, the Bolsheviks intended to arrest and deport him. The Poles were prepared to help the Bishop and they had found a safe place for him.

Bishop Matulaitis thanked him for his consideration.

"And you, my dear Father, what do you intend to do? To flee as well?" asked the Bishop.

"No," he answered.

"Then why do you ask me to flee?"

"Your Excellency, with you it is different. You are needed by the entire Diocese."

"My good example is also very necessary for the entire Diocese. If I go into hiding, God only knows what can happen in the city... No, I do not intend to leave my post. It is not proper for a Bishop to act this way."

The next day, first one person, then another ran in to warn him that the Bolsheviks most as-

suredly would come to arrest him. To the Bishop, all these offers of help seemed like a cover-up for something entirely different. He prepared himself to be deported. He collected all his personal diaries, the more important episcopal documents and those of his congregation as well as the recently obtained authorization from the Apostolic Visitator. He put these into separate packages and entrusted them to reliable people for safe keeping. This done, he wrote: "I said the rosary and went peacefully to sleep" (ibid 194).

STREET BATTLES AT EASTER

The next day, April 19th, the Bishop rose early and heard soldiers running through the streets. He glanced out of the window. A large group of Jewish militia men were trotting past the house to the Cathedral. Soon a few of the Legionnaires cavalry appeared. They tied up their horses across the street and returned on foot to set up machine guns which they fired in the direction of George street. Shots were returned from that direction. "The Legionnaires had caught many of the Bolsheviks asleep... I had observed that there was little discipline in their ranks, but I had not expected that they would have allowed themselves to be surprised like this" (ibid 195).

As it happened, that very same night, the Polish cavalry approached Vilnius undetected and

attacked it from two directions. One group attacked the railroad station and Gediminas Hill, the other pointed toward Green Bridge. After the first volley of gunfire everything became still. The city seemed to be occupied and secured. The Bolsheviks had withdrawn.

On Easter morning, the people gathered hesitantly into the Cathedral. The Bishop celebrated the Resurrection Mass and the seminarian choir sang. Just before the end of Mass, suddenly there was a burst of machine gunfire, hand grenades and artillery volleys. The Cathedral windows began to shatter. The organ stopped. The people fell to the floor. The Bishop was quickly escorted into the sacristy. After a long while, the shooting was heard farther off in the center of the city.

The Bolsheviks had not vanished after all. They had simply withdrawn to the northern and western parts of the city. Having strengthened their positions and reorganized, they attempted to retake the strategic point in the center of the city. The cavalry held on this time, but the danger of being overpowered was ever present... They sent several wagons to bring back more infantry and a battalion of these arrived before night set in.

The street battle began and the people of the area took sides. Some fought with the Poles, others with the Bolsheviks. On the third day, General Rydz-Smigly arrived in Vilnius with his army and definitely overpowered the Bolsheviks. The latter

retreated toward Maišiogala, taking hostage some Lithuanians and a few Poles. The Bishop remained unharmed. Only his residence had been scarred by bullets.

The Polish people rejoiced. The Lithuanians, however, were stunned. They had waited for their own army to arrive at Easter and here were the Legionnaires of Pilsudski.

The Lithuanian army was marching on Vilnius from two directions. The objective of both thrusts was to break the Bolshevik concentration at Žasliai and Daugai. Beyond this knot, according to reconnaissance information, there was a "vacuum" and the road to Vilnius was open. The Bolshevik knot held tightly. The battle lasted four days. Nearby was the German demarcation line. Moscow, sensing the danger, complained to Berlin. They blamed the Germans that, under their protection, the Lithuanians had crossed the demarcation line and had attacked the Russian positions from the rear. The German government requested the Lithuanian government to withdraw their troops and this was effected on April 19th.

The Poles took advantage of this situation. They hurried to be the first to occupy Vilnius. The reason for haste was determined by the fact that they could then present the Paris Peace Conference with an accomplished victory, with Vilnius as their prize.

SORROW IN THE BISHOP'S EYES

This was the first day when no shooting was heard in the streets. Bishop Matulaitis appeared calm but something was burning in his heart. It was already the fourth government in less than six months and there had been a second bloodbath in the streets. The people were distraught, without food, without heat—his flock, his people.

"From the time that he became Bishop, you could see the sorrow in his eyes" (AJM, 102). This did not signify an inner crisis. "Once a task has been undertaken, you must pursue it to the end with determination, trusting in God. If it does not meet with success, then be reassured that it was not your fault" (Diary, 182).

The Bishop was still convinced that the fate of Vilnius would be justly and finally decided by the Peace Conference in Paris. The Poles had assured for themselves the role of rightful participant at the Conference. Even the French supported them. The Lithuanians had sent their delegation on February 15, 1919, but did not obtain a similar position for they had no strong supporters. They remained as observers.

During the armistice, Bishop Matulaitis went to Kaunas on July 13th for the consecration of the suffragan bishop Juozas Skvireckas. Two hundred priests attended these ceremonies.

After the ceremonies the bishops continued their talks on Lithuanian affairs. Then Bishop Matulaitis hurried off to Marijampolė where he received a few candidates into the Marian novitiate and was given information about the needs of the Marians and of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Then he returned to Vilnius and prepared to make visits to the parishes.

The people had not seen a bishop for about fifty years because the Russian tsarist government had not allowed bishops to visit parishes. Now the people gathered in large numbers to greet their bishop and many had tears in their eyes. It was the first time that Bishop Matulaitis felt he was cordially welcomed wherever he went.

A VISIT TO WARSAW

Bishop Matulaitis went to Warsaw in October at the invitation of Achilles Ratti who had been nominated as archbishop and elevated to Nuncio of Poland (He remained Visitator to Lithuania and Latvia).

At the Marians' place in Bieliany, Bishop Matulaitis found the newly established boys' high school, a group of novices and a great number of priests. After examining everything and making the necessary decisions, he went along to see the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. First of all, they begged him to amend their Constitutions in accordance with the newly published Canons of the Church. Another problem of theirs concerned the Lithuanian girls who wished to return to Lithuania. The question was: Is the time right? Bishop Matulaitis promised to amend the Constitutions. As for the Lithuanian girls, he advised them not to delay because they were very much needed in Lithuania.

He bid farewell to the Nuncio and was informed that the latter would soon be in Vilnius. Once at home he was inundated with many affairs and did not realize that the anniversary of his consecration and installation was close at hand.

A NEW YEAR'S VISITOR FROM KAUNAS

The priests and religious of Vilnius came in the evening to greet the Bishop. Father Benedik-

tas Andriuška, a Jesuit, had arrived also, and was now mingling with the guests. He scrutinized the Bishop closely, for this was the first time that he had seen him. "He seemed to be tired and pale, but his eyes sparkled with fathrly good-will towards all."

After the speeches, the Bishop shook hands with each priest. Father Rudnicki, the superior of the Vilnius Jesuits, introduced Father Andriuška as the only Lithuanian Jesuit. "His Excellency smiled kindly," writes Father Andriuška, "and looking at me intently as he passed by, whispered: "Come to see me at supper."

"At the appointed time, I was there for supper. It was a very simple meal. We were the only ones present. Before the visit, I had gathered some information to prepare myself for it. For example, I found out what the national position of the Vilnius Jesuits was and some general information about the Bishop and the Lithuanian situation. With regard to the Bishop's position, it appeared that everything was against him and he was entirely alone."

"I was more than interested to hear from the Bishop himself about the Jesuit Fathers' activities. Would he profess disappointment with the involvement in national affairs? To my amazement and hidden disappointment he did not express his opinion on these matters. He was reticent and said little. I asked about religious and national affairs in general. He did not complain about anyone, nor did

he attack anyone. Only at my persistent questioning did he answer with facts."

"I left the dinner with the impression that this man was carrying a heavy burden... But how long would he be able to continue bearing it? Here was a man dedicated to constructive work, totally religious-minded and so noble in all his endeavors" (ibid 188).

NUNCIO RATTI IN VILNIUS AND KAUNAS

It was extremely cold on January 24, 1920. The Apostolic Visitator to the Baltic States was met at the Vilnius railroad station by Bishop Matulaitis, General Szeptycki, the Army Commander of Vilnius, and representatives of the city. He was taken from the station to the Gate of Dawn Chapel, where he prayed and admired the shrine. Then he was taken to the Bishop's residence. The next day, the guest celebrated solemn Mass in the Cathedral. Later, he received the delegations and visited the churches and institutions. He paid a visit to a Lithuanian high school and to a large orphanage in Vilnius as well.

He had heard a great many good things about Bishop Matulaitis and he was also informed about the accusations of the Poles against him. He now had the opportunity to talk things over and draw his own conclusions, to compare notes with what he had heard from the Polish hierarchy, many of

whom he had met personally during his first year and a half in the country. The dedication of Bishop Matulaitis to the Church was unquestionable as was his determination to rise above political and national interests. During the conversation, it became obvious that the Nuncio was well-informed about Poland, Lithuania and Russsia. He had keen insight into the complex situation.

Prior to the visit the Lithuanians had sent two delegates to the Vatican with these requests: to recognize Lithuania as a sovereign state; to establish an ecclesiastical province; and to appoint a separate Nuncio by granting a Lithuanian Cardinal. The Vatican promised to recognize Lithuania's sovereignty as soon as the great nations did the same. They left the appointment of the Nuncio under consideration. The other matters were to be decided later. Some of these requests were repeated now to the Visitor.

After dinner, Archbishop Ratti was escorted to the station and he returned to Warsaw by way of Vilnius on January 31st.

WILL THE NERVES HOLD OUT?

From the beginning of the new year, a conspiracy of the press against the Bishop and against all Lithuanian parish priests was launched.

This persecution continued during all of 1921 and lasted until 1925, as long as Bishop Matulaitis

remained bishop. The arrests did not cease nor did the threats. On March 17, 1921, Father Kazimieras Lajauskas was killed. On December 17, 1925, the principal of the Merkinė Middle School, Rev. Dr. J. Bakšys, was shot. It was through him that aid for the Lithuanian schools and institutions had been sent to Vilnius. These methods were being used to harass the Bishop.

The Bishop was not apprehensive about his own safety, but he found it necessary to take a stand against the arbitrary terrorization of the priests.

One day, for example, Rev. Karolis Gumbaragis, pastor of Lazdūnai, was arrested and removed to Lūkiškis prison in Vilnius. The Curia was informed of this by the district prosecutor of the court with the warning that the priest was being threatened with execution unless the Bishop transfered him to another parish. The information was received April 3, 1925, by the Chancellor, Rev. Chalecki, who at once relayed it to the Bishop. The Bishop listened to him and said:

"Let him be shot, if he is guilty. I will not transfer him!"

The Chancellor objected:

"Your Excellency! A priest's life is at stake here!"

"If I were to transfer him today, then tomorrow they would arrest ten more Lithuanian priests on the same pretext."

A few days later, Rev. Gumbaragis was released.

On March 19, 1920, Bishop Matulaitis wrote to Bishop Būčys: "My worries and misfortunes are much the same. The attacks never cease... I wonder if my nerves and my health will hold out. Let it be as God wills."

NO SIGNS OF GOODWILL

In the month of June, Bishop Jurgis began to visit the parishes in the Bialystok Deanery. The people received him respectfully, sincerely and with love. The newspaper campaign against him had not biased the people, except perhaps for a few landowners and officials of the administration.

"I am now visiting sections of my diocese," he wrote on June 25th to Pranas Būčys, "and I am feeling quite tired." It was not easy for him to travel from one place to another, to spend long hours in stuffy churches, preaching two or three sermons each day and giving Confirmation to row upon row of children, then inspecting the parish records, listening to the problems of the priests and of the people. And this, day after day.

His fatigue was great, but his joy was also great. A different feeling would overwhelm him

when he returned to Vilnius, but he was not ready to return yet. There was the entire month of July ahead of him.

VISITATIONS HALTED

The first week of July passed and so did the second. Then he received news that the Poles were withdrawing from Vilnius and were allowing someone else to take it. But who? The Reds! The Bishop decided to return at once.

He took a train at Bialystok and reached Gardinas (Grodno). Here he found that there were no travel connections to Vilnius. He inquired here and there about the best way to reach the city. He met an engine-driver who, after some discussion, warned him that the trip might be uncertain and dangerous. The tracks could be ripped up in some places and bridges destroyed.

The two climbed into the front part of the engine and started the journey, watching the road carefully. They had gone quite a distance before they started to converse. The Bishop asked the man about his family and his life. The man in turn asked the Bishop certain things and received a frank answer. The journey lasted about twenty-four hours and brought together the worker and the workers' protector. When they reached Vilnius, both looked alike, blackened with soot, hungry and without sleep. The Bishop wanted to pay the man, but he

simply kissed his ring and asked for his blessing.

In the bishop's residence, Andrius Meciūnas met him. He was surprised and alarmed, for he had never seen his Bishop in such a condition—so dirty and so tired. He helped him to undress, drew his bath and prepared him a meal.

"My dear Bishop! Now go to bed and rest!" The Bishop removed his cross and ring, placed them on the night table and fell asleep. In the middle of his sleep he was awakened by a rough voice. He opened his eyes. The Red soldiers were searching for Legionnaires and for weapons. When they left the room, the cross and ring were gone. Thus, the precious gifts, presented by the Lithuanian Council, disappeared. The Bishop obtained a simple cross and unpretentious ring.

The next day a few party members arrived to tell the Bishop that he must leave his residence. "The Bishop explained to them," writes his servant Andrius, "that he also is a communist."

"I am a religious," he said, "I have no property or wealth. I arrived here with only a suitcase."

"But, the house and furniture are beautiful," noticed the young man.

"They are not mine either," said the Bishop. "Everything here is like in a commune—it all belongs to the Church. When I am no longer here, another will use it and care for it."

"But this house is so large," argued the young

man. "We want to bring our wives here" (AJM, 142-43).

The Bishop made ready to leave the premises. He packed his most needed articles in a suitcase and waited. One of the "wives" came, looked over the rooms and, whether sorry for the Bishop or displeased with the house, she informed him that she would not live there.

THE LITHUANIANS RETURN TO VILNIUS

When they realized that the Bishop had returned, his friends began to visit him. Bishop Matulaitis had lost contact with current events.

It was news to the Bishop that a few days earlier, on July 12th, Lithuania had signed a peace treaty with the Soviets and that according to this agreement, Vilnius and a large area to the east now belonged to Lithuania. During the Soviet-Polish war, Lithuania had declared its neutrality. The Poles began to withdraw from Vilnius and the Lithuanians sent in their own army. The Lithuanians only entered the capital on July 15th and found the Bolsheviks already there.

The Bishop was able to follow further events himself.

The Lithuanian institutions reorganized swiftly and became operative at once. Meanwhile, the Bishop found himself in a new predicament. Entire deaneries were without priests. They had escaped

from the Bolsheviks to Poland. Where necessary, he placed Lithuanian and White Russian priests. "Bishop Jurgis," writes Bishop Juozas Kukta, "appointed priests so that they would be acceptable to the people and able to meet their particular language needs. If there were objections offered, he found means to overcome them" (AJM 95).

It was a dangerous time, but on September 25th, the Bishop set out for Marijampolė. Rev. N. Raštutis had asked him for a Sister to work with the children at the Trinapolis orphanage and Bishop Matulaitis had promised to speak to the Superior. He remained only a few days in Marijampolė. He took care of several things pertaining to the Marians and also those of the Sisters and returned to Vilnius. Soon, Sister Agota Kudirka arrived. She had been permitted by her superiors to work with the children in Trinapolis. In a letter to Rev. Būčys, the Bishop writes on September 28th.

"I had barely reached Marijampolė to visit my religious Communities, when I had to return hurriedly to Vilnius. My nerves can hardly adjust to all these changes... In only two years I have lived under six governments in Vilnius... Life returns to normal for a while and then is disrupted once more... If the Poles take Vilnius, things will begin boiling over and I wonder if they will tolerate me. Even though I do not interfere in politics, they nevertheless cannot face the fact that a Lithuanian is Bishop of Vilnius."

The Military Control Committee could not overlook the advancing Polish army. They demanded it to seek peace with the Lithuanians. Once forced to do so, the Polish offered peace negotiations which were begun on September 29th in Suvalkai. The session lasted nine days until both sides coordinated their demands.

On October 7th, an agreement was signed and war activities stopped. The next day Bishop Jurgis learned of the successful agreement. He was happy that now he could direct his diocesan affairs in peace.

AN ARMY OF INTRUDERS

On the afternoon of October 8th, shots were heard on Main Street. The Bishop went to the window. Rev. Krikščiukaitis followed him. They looked out and saw Lithuanians returning fire and retreating. Strangely dressed soldiers, or non-soldiers, were shooting at them. Through the window of the dining room they could see the Gediminas Hill. There, a group of men were trying to pull down the Lithuanian flag, but it would not budge. One man climbed up the pole and tore it down. In its place, he raised the Polish flag with its white eagle.

The Bishop seemed unruffled. Rev. Krikščiukaitis writes with admiration at the way he was so marvelously able to control himself. Soon after, the

Lithuanian guards returned to their posts and all seemed quiet again. Meanwhile, the city was being surrounded by an army of nearly three to four divisions.

The city of Vilnius was in a state of panic. There were robberies and settlement of accounts with the Jews, thirty of whom were killed that night. The terrorist activities continued. The Rabbis asked the Bishop to intercede. He tried to do so, but no one would pay any attention to him. The Jews began to flee from the city. The Lithuanians were ready for their turn. It came on October 12th, when the publishing of all Lithuanian newspapers was halted. On October 14th, a state of war was declared. The Bishop advised the Lithuanian leaders to be watchful, for riots spared no one.

THE BISHOP'S DILEMMA

The state of war obstructed the Bishop's contact with his flock. For some time he had been living like a prisoner. He was pleased, however, that Father Jonas was with him. He stayed because he could not return to Marijampolė. Meanwhile, the runaway priests kept returning from Poland and demanded their former parishes.

The news from the provinces was no better. The army and the commanders did as they pleased. Rev. L., who just recently arrived from Švenčionys,

reported that they had taken over the Lithuanian high school building and allowed them to use it only in the afternoon from four to nine, a time most inconvenient for the students. The soldiers robbed the people and terrorized them. Poverty was rampant. The people had no seeds for sowing their fields. A priest from Šilėnai reported that an army Commander took young men from church on Sundays, ostensibly for army duty, and later demanded several thousand marks for their release from service. The Commander was vehemently set against all Lithuanian priests.

The Bishop asked them to write down all the facts and to present them to him. In his own diary he writes that all the priests confirmed the wicked behavior of the soldiers towards the people. They robbed and stole. Even murders were committed. In some places, the women and girls were assaulted. There was no discipline. In fact, there was almost complete chaos, especially among the lancers. The Bishop was prepared to go and see the army commanders.

One day, "the President of the Ruling Committee," Mr. Abramowicz, a man of leftist views, came to see the Bishop. He asked him to help control people of opposing views, namely—that he remove Rev. Olšanski from Vilnius and retain Rev. Zenkiewicz, whom he regarded as a leftist. "The Bishop absolutely refused to grant this request," writes Bishop J. Kukta (AJM, 94). Abramowicz

tried to entice priests into General Pilsudski's farmers' organization.

The entanglement of priests in political affairs disturbed the Bishop greatly. He spoke about this with Canon Kukta. One evening they both went to visit Mr. M. Biržiška who recalls that they spoke "about those priests, especially the Polish ones, who meddled in politics. It is amazing that he spoke with respect even about those who clearly opposed him... regarding their behavior as simply human weakness" (AJM, 149). On June 28, 1919, Bishop Matulaitis wrote the priests a circular letter in which he repeated Pope Benedict XV's directive that priests were to preach only on religious subjects, avoiding political themes. He encouraged them to concern themselves with the work of the Church, for there was plenty to do, and in their spare time they could participate in educational and community activities. He did not have much hope, however, that this letter would change anything.

TWO UNREQUESTED SUFFRAGANS

Bishop Jurgis had already requested Rome in 1919 to appoint a suffragan bishop and he had suggested two candidates. Rome believed that, since conditions were so unstable, it was better to wait. Then suddenly, Bishop Wladislow Bandurski, former suffragan of Lvov and at present chief chaplain of the "Lithuanian-White Russian Army"

arrived uninvited. He was fourteen years younger than Bishop Matulaitis, eloquent, democratic and a zealous participant in army parades and national ceremonies. He preached patriotic and political sermons and supported all government ventures. The reason for his arrival and continued presence in Vilnius was, according to Rev. Pranas Būčys, to eclipse Bishop Matulaitis (AJM, 28). But, actually, he did more to eclipse the endeks who felt fearful of his influence. Unable to counterbalance Matulaitis, they invited another bishop, Karol Hryniewiecki, an 80-year-old man who had been Bishop of Vilnius from 1883 to 1885. The Russians had deposed and sent him into exile, but later allowed him to live in Galicia, governed by the Austrians. The Poles regarded him as a national martyr.

Bishop Matulaitis had the opportunity of meeting him in 1919, when he came to Vilnius for an unofficial visit. He had a pleasant face, was tall and thin with deep eyes and bluish lips. He seemed to be fading, but this was only a first impression. Bishop Matulaitis had arranged a reception at his residence and invited the priests. The old man stood up to speak and suddenly he grew animated: his face and lips became flushed and his eyes sparkled. When he was bishop here, he said, there were no Lithuanians or White Russians, only faithful Polish Catholics. Now these other nationalities have been introduced with money coming from the Russians, Jews, Germans and Masons. The host

himself was reprimanded for his Lithuanian chauvinism.

Now that he had come, the endeks took him everywhere—to the orphanages, the workers' meetings, the institutions, the headquarters of the various associations and the editorial offices. He could not restrain himself from speaking out to whomever he happened to meet in front of the churches or in the streets—to the women as well as to the men. His talk was repetitive: he always spoke against the White Russians, the Lithuanians, Jews and Masons and against the Lithuanian bishop. One of his interviews aroused tremendous furor and long-continued polemics.

"His presence in Vilnius," writes Bishop Matulaitis in his diary, "hurt the Church greatly. He caused a new wave of animosity which further disrupted the already strained local interrelationships. He was not a sower of love, peace and hope, but an agitator and instigator."

The Lithuanians had intended to collect all the facts about his activities and send them to Rome, but it seems that they failed to do so.

As for Bishop Bandurski, not only the endeks disliked what he was doing, but even a moderate like the priest-journalist Toloczko disapproved of him. He advised Bandurski to leave Vilnius and to stop disturbing the faithful with his chauvinism, for even Lithuanian hospitality had its limits. But the Chancellor Chalecki defended Bishop Bandur-

ski in the press, saying that a priest has no right to attack a bishop and that Toloczko ought to be punished. The latter retaliated by asking the Chancellor to give a reason for his failure to suggest punishment for those priests who wrote under pennames, attacking the local ordinary, Bishop Matulaitis (Rev. Kriščiukaitis' Memoirs). Matulaitis, nevertheless, reprimanded Reverend Toloczko and ordered him to make a public apology.

It appears that "when Bishop Bandurski came to Vilnius, Bishop Matulaitis was warned by the Polish episcopate to be cautious because Bandurski was suspected of being a supporter of the nationalist church and a radical chauvinist. Yet, after they confronted each other, they became friends. Bishop Bandurski, in gratitude for the much-needed moral and financial help that he received from Bishop Matulaitis at the time, thereafter often defended him against the attacks of the Polish nationalists," writes Mykolas Biržiška (AJM, 149).

After he had obtained fresh divisions from Pilsudski, General Želigowski, within three weeks, was able to conquer for "Central Lithuania" territories as far as Giedraičiai, Širvintai, Želva and Balninkai. The Military Control Committee of the Allies was powerless, or perhaps not overly insistent on stopping the armed invasion. The Lithuanians were not prepared to resist, but the desire to do so was steadily increasing. The Lithuanian army was

augmented with new volunteers and a test of strength took place near Širvintai and Giedraičiai, not far from Ukmergė. It was a shattering experience for high school freshmen to watch the wagonloads of the wounded being taken to the hospital, among them the senior students from the Ukmergė secondary school, who had enlisted as volunteers. The battles near Širvintai continued, but, on November 19th, a Polish brigade and regimental staff, along with many soldiers and army equipment, fell into the hands of the Lithuanians.. Within three days, the Polish army had also suffered a loss at Giedraičiai. After these victories, the Lithuanians were able to advance further in the direction of Vilnius.

Then the Military Control Committee intervened. It ordered a ceasefire and an end of the conflict by peaceful means under the supervision of the League of Nations. The Lithuanians were forced to sign an armistice agreement and to accept a temporary neutral zone. Their legal suit against the Poles was handed over by the Committee to the League of Nations.

As the Bishop was preparing to celebrate midnight Mass at Christmas, there was little good will to be seen. It was very sad. It seemed that even the glory of God was being extinguished in his diocese.

AN ELUSIVE PEACE

New Year's Day, 1921, began with a festive commemoration of the "January Uprising". It was three years since the Legionnaires' invasion, which had lasted a week and left the Jews, the White Russians and the Lithuanians with bitter memories. Bishop Jurgis was invited to participate in the commemoration.

General Mokrzecki, the newly designated "president" replacing Mr. Abramowicz, participated in the ceremonies. When he took over the duties, he organized an honorary committee to conduct a plebiscite in Silesia (German *Schlesien*, Polish *Śląsk*). He invited Bishop Matulaitis to be one of its members. After one session, February 9th, the General requested the Bishop to stay on.

Mornings for the Bishop were filled with appointments. At times he even had to delay his lunch for an hour or so. After lunch he took a walk and then returned to his office to receive more visitors. Only after supper, if there were no more callers, could he undertake his own work.

One of these projects was the updating of religious constitutions in accordance with the newly promulgated Canon Law in 1918. The religious communities were well aware that he was competent in this field and therefore sought his help. The first to seek assistance were the Dolorist Brothers of Vilnius. He amended their constitutions and Rome confirmed them without any corrections. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, in addition to amendments, requested stricter rules for the practice of asceticism, but Rome did not confirm these. However, the constitutions of the Servants of the Heart of Jesus were also approved without correction. He wrote all these amendments on index cards in Latin so he could more easily verify them (*Draugas*, 1967, No. 32).

This task required him to work at night and it was often difficult to be alert at such a late hour. He usually retired at ten or eleven o'clock and rose at five in the morning. As he wished to finish his work, he sometimes rose at four or even three o'clock in the morning. He would say, writes Rev.

Kriščiukaitis, that the mind functions better then and no one disturbs him at that time.

During Lent, he delivered the evening sermons on Christ's passion. The people loved the quiet, simple meditations. "The Cathedral during these sermons on Christ's passion was filled with people," the Bishop notes in his diary. At times he was persuaded to give a conference or a sermon in one of the other churches. At St. Nicholas church, he spoke to the Lithuanian high school students. "Everyone listened to his words very attentively," writes one of those present. "It amazed us that such an important clergyman and of such great learning spoke to us so simply. We were filled with inner joy" (AJM, 152).

In the middle of Lent, on March 16th, the old Archbishop Hryniewiecki visited him. He looked very tired and complained of ill health. The air in Vilnius was bad. He did not know that this was to be his last visit. Hryniewiecki informed the Bishop that he was leaving Vilnius and returning to Galicia where the air was healthier.

Matulaitis bid him farewell with a forgiving heart. "The old man, you see, must be forgiven everything, but more culpable are those who, because of his advanced age, used him for their wicked intrigues" (Diary, 1921.III.16).

At the beginning of July, suffering great fatigue, the Bishop spent a short vacation at the farm in Trinapolis. Rev. Kriščiukaitis went with him.

The children gathered around the Bishop for they knew he would caress each one, look them in the eyes, pull out some candy from one of his pockets and a holy card from the other. He wanted to see Rev. N. Raštutis, who was always so busy, and to determine how things were being managed. Father Raštutis was most grateful to the Bishop for the requested helper, Sister Kudirka.

When he had inspected everything and met everyone, the Bishop refrained from interfering in the affairs of the orphanage any further. Most often, he rested or walked with Father Jonas. As there were no other serious matters to attend to, they were able to speak more intimately. From that time on, Rev. Kriščiukaitis felt that the Bishop had become especially close and friendly towards him. (*Draugas* 1967, N 31). After he had rested and regained his strength, he was ready again to visit the parishes. He told Father Jonas to return to Vilnius to see to the correspondence, to glance over the newspapers and, if time allowed, to continue collecting Lithuanian books for the monastery's library in Marijampolė.

The Bishop returned to Vilnius in the fall after his parish visitations, feeling very tired, but he did not go back to Trinapolis. He settled down to some hard work. A part of this work he delegated to Father Jonas, such as financial matters, the scheduling of Mass intentions and the supervision of the servants. Other things connected with the mainte-

nance and repair of the residence he had already assigned to the curia notary, Rev. Jurgis Januševičius.

On his return, the Bishop was deeply upset over the information that on August 1st, while he had been visiting the parishes, the Polish police searched the large Lithuanian orphanage on Subačius Street. They had arrested its director, B. Valiušis, and also four aides and eight students. On August 24th, they demanded that in two days the orphanage be moved elsewhere. Since there was no place to go, they waited. Rev. Pranas Bieliauskas. president of the Vilnius branch of the Lithuanian charities organization, asked the Bishop what should be done. This was not the first time that the Poles had swooped down to search and make arrests at one or another of the ten Lithuanian orphanages or boarding schools in Vilnius. After these harassments, usually, they left them in peace. This institution had 250 children and thirty aides. Could they throw out all these people into the streets? The Bishop advised him to wait. Perhaps the government would relent, for it would not want a scandal occurring during the Brussels negotiations with the Lithuanians.

However, outrage followed outrage. On September 20th, the city government requisitioned a students' boarding house and two buildings operated by the Lithuanian Society. On October 1st, the police, with the help of the army, threw into

the streets the students of the Lithuanian Vytautas the Great High School which was in Lukiškis Square. The students were beaten and some were even bayonetted. This incident was reported in the Lithuanian daily newspaper *Vilnius*, edited by M. Biržiška. This issue was immediately confiscated and the newspaper itself shut down by the Polish government. On October 5th, the police forced into the streets 250 Lithuanian children, among whom were orphans of four to seven years of age. They also evicted thirty aides and cast out all the furniture belonging to the large orphanage.

It was difficult to understand what the Poles intended to achieve by these acts of terror. The Bishop was powerless in the face of these events.

THE CESSATION OF THE BRUSSELS NEGOTIATIONS

The Lithuanian-Polish negotiations in Brussels, begun on April 21st, were stalled because of the difficulty of co-ordinating the historical and ethnographical borders of Lithuania. The Polish had recognized the sovereignty of Lithuania in the Suvalkai agreement and the Lithuanians used this agreement as a point of departure in the talks. They did make concessions for the White Russian districts. The Poles, however, wanted to impose the White Russian districts on Lithuania and to burden her with federation ties to their own country. Hy-

mans, the negotiator for both nations, offered a compromise on May 20th: both nations were to remain sovereign, but working together closely in matters of foreign politics, defense and agriculture. Lithuania, according to this proposal, was to be organized in the manner of the Swiss Federation with two autonomous cantons of Vilnius and Kaunas. The capital was to be Vilnius, with two official languages—Lithuanian and Polish. The proposal was accepted by both parties as a basis for further negotiations.

On September 3rd, Mr. Hymans offered a second proposal. He withdrew the projected federation system for Lithuania, but retained the idea of autonomous canton rights for the Vilnius district. All the other conditions, including mutual co-operation with Poland, were also retained. This project was not acceptable to the Poles, since they did not wish to recognize the sovereignty of Lithuania over the Vilnius district. The Lithuanians also objected because the second proposal, like the first, placed Lithuania in the position of vassal to Poland. The Lithuanians rejected it in December. The Poles also having refused it, the entire Vilnius question was returned to the League of Nations Council.

Meanwhile, the Poles undertook a unilateral step. On September 16th, the parliament of Warsaw accepted the offer to hold elections in the Vilnius district and to allow the elected local parliament to decide the district's destiny. According to

this decision, General Żeligowski, on September 20th, announced that elections to the Vilnius parliament would take place on January 8, 1922. To prepare for and to conduct these elections, General Żeligowski, on November 21st, appointed Aleksander Meysztowicz the new president of Central Lithuania. He was a man from the city of Panevėžys and owner of the Pajuostė estates. The Lithuanian Committee on December 27th announced to the people and the Polish government that the Lithuanians would not participate in these elections. Similar committees of the White Russians and the Jews made the same announcement.

The elections to the Vilnius parliament did take place on the appointed day, but only the Poles participated, and only 18% of these voted. The Control Commission observed the election and its president, Colonel Chardigny, on January 20th, sent this report to the League of Nations: "Considering that the Lithuanians, Jews and a great majority of the White Russians officially refrained from voting in the elections, and that the elections, moreover, took place under the regime of the war-time occupation army, where the Polish element was in a position to exert pressure, it is obvious that the present Vilnius parliament cannot be considered a true and sincere expression of the will of the people in the voting areas." A strong protest was also made to the League of Nations by the leaders of Lithuania concerning these elections.

The parliament went into session, however, not knowing exactly what to do. There were uncertainties, perhaps even fears, that the Lithuanians and White Russians would raise a furor and would promote unpleasantries abroad.

A VISIT BY THE POLICE

It was late in the evening of January 23, 1922. The police knocked on the Bishop's door and Andrius Meciūnas admitted seven men. Some were in uniform, others were not—that is, there were members of the public and the secret police. These commanded him to take them to the Bishop's room. The servant replied that it was not his prerogative to escort just anyone to the Bishop's room without his permission. They ordered him to take them to the Bishop and were surprised to find him sick in bed. They requested permission to search Andrius Meciūnas; and the Bishop, believing that there was some misundestranding, allowed the search. They ransacked his room, but did not find anything. Yet, they arrested him and took him off to prison (AJM, 145). Already imprisoned were the previously arrested Lithuanian Committee members—nineteen Lithuanians in all. During those days, January 20 to 23rd, thirteen White Russian leaders were arrested and imprisoned as well. Only three Lithuanians were interrogated: Canon Kukta, M. Biržiška, and A. Randamonis. They were accused of

the following: fostering a revolt against the Polish government, supplying arms and dynamite, and planning to dig a secret tunnel under the Vilnius parliament chambers. Legal action would be taken against them for these reasons and the severest punishment allowed by the criminal code would be applied.

THE BISHOP'S SERVANT AMONG THE 33 EXILES

Reverend Kriščiukaitis writes: "In the middle of the night, Andrius' [Meciūnas] sister screamed and awakened me from sleep. 'My brother has been arrested,' she lamented. It turned out that two policemen had led Andrius to his room to pick up warmer clothes, bed sheets, etc. Neither Andrius nor the two policemen knew where he was being taken. Andrius was allowed to say good-by to the Bishop and the police accompanied him to the bedroom. That he would be exiled to another country never entered our minds, and so Andrius was supplied only with Polish money. The next day we learned that all 33 of the arrested men were deported past the Demarcation Line and into Lithuania" (ibid, N 34).

This entire episode occurred on February 5, 1922. Of the 33 (which included several White Russian activists), Andrius Meciūnas, a senior student from Rodūne, was the only youth. His only crime was that of faithfully serving the Bishop

of Vilnius. He had been arrested in order to hurt the Bishop, perhaps to cast a shadow of suspicion on him because of the untrustworthy servants he employed, one of whom was exiled along with other "criminals." After he had been exiled, the *Gazeta Warszawska* reported that the Bishop of Vilnius retains in his employment a dreadful Lithuanian chauvinist. He was alleged to have been questioned by spies who wanted to know if the Bishop trusted him. They were also eager to know what language was used when he spoke with the Bishop.

The stick of President Meysztowicz was found to have two ends. He had annoyed Lithuania because of the arrests, displeased the League of Nations, and caused the Control Commission to intervene. Then Gabriel Narutavičius, minister of Public Affairs, was sent from Warsaw to take care of the matter. He forced President Meysztowicz to release the arrested men and to exile them to Lithuania. Narutowicz was elected President of Poland that very same year. On December 14th, two days later, he was shot by E. Newiedomski.

On February 20th, the Vilnius "parliament" voted a resolution to incorporate the Vilnius district into the Polish state. Following this resolution, on March 2nd, the parliament of Warsaw annexed eastern Lithuania to Poland. After four days, the parliament of Vilnius was dismissed and the government of Central Lithuania dispersed. General Żeligowski was publicly rehabilitated as a soldier

who had accomplished his mission. President Meysztowicz was given a directorship of a bank in Vilnius. The only one whose position became more complicated and uncertain was that of Bishop Matulaitis.

GOD SCOURGES ME WITH VILNIUS

On the second day after parliament had voted to annex Eastern Lithuania to Poland, Pope Benedict XV died. He had blessed Lithuania with two meaningful favors. He was the first to proclaim a Lithuanian Day for the entire world (1917). Secondly, he had appointed (1918) a Lithuanian Bishop to Vilnius. It was the first time that the world had learned about war-devastated Lithuania and it hastened with offers of help. It was also the first time that Vilnius obtained a Bishop who was a true Lithuanian.

On the second day after the 33 persons had been exiled, among whom were some of Bishop Maculaitis' co-workers, Cardinal Achilles Ratti was elected Pope. He was elected on the fourteenth ballot. "We had just taken Cardinal Ratti past the

14th station and now we have abandoned him to the hill of Calvary," said the Hungarian Cardinal Csernoch to Cardinal Mercier of Belgium. Bishop Matulaitis was still waiting for his own Calvary.

AN EXILE APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR

That evening it was still uncertain who was to be Pope. The Bishop celebrated Mass in his chapel. He prayed that God would grant the Church a suitable Pope. At the memento for the living in the Mass, he prayed for Andrius, Biržiška, Kukta and all the exiled persons.

At breakfast, he was very quiet. Rev. Kriščiukaitis knew the reason for this silence. Both felt the loss of Andrius. While he was in prison, they had waited for his release. Now it was evident that he would never return and that another like him would never be found.

After lunch, they learned who had been elected Pope. The Bishop immediately sat down to write a letter of congratulations. It was dated February 7th and it concluded with these words: "May the almighty God grant true peace and mutual understanding to all countries and nations in our region and those fallen from unity with the Catholic Church... find in her joyful refuge and fatherly good-will under your Holiness."

There was one among those exiled whom the Bishop especially missed. He was his "Kuktelė"

(diminutive for Canon Kukta), an old friend from his Petersburg days. They had become close and inseparable friends, but life had placed one of them in Vilnius and the other in Poland.

Rev. Kriščiukaitis comments upon this friendship: "When the Bishop said, 'Call Kuktele,' you knew that there was a reason to confer with him. Or, 'Why doesn't Kuktelė come?" And, when he did, the Bishop would drop everything, sit down with him and they would talk like brothers. They were similar in appearance and in wisdom and in some indefinable way as well."

Rev. Kukta knew the diocese of Vilnius, its priests, its parishes, the inter-relationship of the various nationalities. "He enjoyed the friendship of many people, both Lithuanians and Poles. For Bishop Jurgis, then, during his first year, he was an ideal advisor in diocesan matters and the Bishop took advantage of his advice and appreciated it deeply" (*Draugas* 1967, N 34).

One day, perhaps three weeks later, the Bishop said to Father Jonas: "I must appoint Rev. Kukta administrator of that section of the diocese which is in Lithuania itself."

"Canon Kukta's appointment papers with all necessary authorization were immediately drawn up (1922.III.3) and notice of the appointment of Canon Kukta was sent that very same day to the government of Lithuania," writes Rev. Kriščiukaitis (ibid).

Canon Kukta assumed his duties and notified the Bishop of the fact. No one had any doubts or worries over the appointment, but, after a year's time, the Polish government asked the Bishop by letter: "Is it true that Canon Kukta, punished for the betrayal of the nation, has been appointed administrator of the Demarcation Line?" This question received this answer: "No administrator has been appointed to the Demarcation Line. There is no need for one. Canon Kukta was appointed administrator of the section of Vilnius diocese which is within the territory of Lithuania. If Canon Kukta has been punished, why was the Bishop not informed of this?" A written statement was then received from the district court which informed the Bishop that Canon Kukta *is accused* of a crime (ibid).

WHOM TO CHOOSE FOR SUFFRAGAN

In the latter part of June, Bishop Matulaitis attended the bishops' conference in Częstachowa. The new Nuncio, Archbishop Lorenzo Lauri, was present also. When Matulaitis returned to Vilnius, he began to visit the parishes in the district of Vilnius. These visitations lasted until the end of August, when he returned home a sick man. On September 15th, he wrote to Rev. Būčys who had returned from Chicago to Kaunas: "After the visitation of the parishes, I am ill. I write from a sick-

bed." On October 14th he again writes: "My health is much better now. I have resumed my work. Soon I will be able to go out."

He had been ill with pneumonia. The illness, with its ups and downs, lasted for a longer time. When he felt better, he did his work from his bed, supervising the affairs of the diocese through his chancellor, who visited him daily. He wrote instructions to the deans, arranged the constitutions for the Casimirite Sisters, corresponded with the Marians in America, Lithuania and Warsaw. On November 25th, the Lithuanians had the opportunity of greeting him on the occasion of his 25th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood.

His ill health and the changed political situation made it necessary for him to seek a suffragan. He no longer tried to obtain the candidates he had earlier suggested to Rome, but had come up with a new one, namely—Monsignor Michalkevičius. He had his motives and wished to hear the opinion of his most trusted priests. He first talked with Rev. Kriščiukaitis.

"What would you say if the suffragan of Vilnius were to be Msgr. Michalkevičius?"

"Msgr. Michalkevičius? I do not like the idea."

"Why?"

"What kind of administrator did he show himself to be? Where is his tact? Why, he's even an endek! And look how he acts toward the Lithuanians!"

"Then whom would you suggest, Father?"

"There are some good Polish priests, who are not endeks or politicians, but true Catholics."

"It is true. No doubt there are such priests, but please point out to me at least one of them."

"Just because I do not know one, it doesn't mean that there aren't any."

"If one were found, can it be guaranteed, Father, that he, although a true Catholic, as you say, once he became suffragan of Vilnius, will not become a politician and an endek, given the situation in Vilnius?"

"That could be," agreed Father Jonas.

The Bishop admitted that Msgr. Michalkevičius was unsuitable for governing the diocese. Yet, the duties of a suffragan were different. He could be of real help since he knew the diocese, had the confidence of the Poles, and was well-disposed toward the Bishop himself.

Rev. Kriščiukaitis interpreted the Bishop's thoughts thus: it is better to deal with someone you know than to risk working with an unknown person. As for Michalkevičius' attitude toward the Lithuanians, it had changed perceptibly in 1920 when he tried to escape the Bolsheviks by going to Poland. The Reds caught him on the road and took him to Moscow. It was thanks to the Lithuanian delegation, when it was signing an agreement with the Soviets, that he was freed from prison. Monsignor M. did not forget this.

After hearing the opinions of the priests, Bishop Matulaitis sent a request to Rome on November 2nd asking for the appointment of Michalkevičius as assistant to the Bishop of the Vilnius diocese. He sent it through Archbishop A. Zecchini who lately had been appointed to the higher rank of Apostolic Delegate for the Baltic States who since October 2nd, was a resident of Riga. This was the new Pope's favorable gesture to these countries. In November, Pope Pius XI officially acknowledged the Baltic States *de jure.*

It took a long time for a reply to come from Rome. This meant that, in the interim, Monsignor Michalkevičius knew nothing about Bishop Matulaitis' choice.

THE PRESIDENT VISITS VILNIUS

The President of Poland, Gabriel Narutavičius, who was of Lithuanian origin, had been assasinated and, in his place, Stanislow Wojciechowski was elected on December 20th. After his inauguration, he intended to visit Vilnius. The testimonial was to consist of services in the Cathedral to be officiated by Bishop Matulaitis.

In the past, the Bishop had successfully avoided church services for political purposes. When General Želigowski took Vilnius, Bishop Matulaitis had been invited to conduct the victory celebration in the Cathedral, but he excused himself by

saying that he had already offered Mass in the chapel. Another time, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Polish occupation, rather than having to offer Solemn Mass, he began to make his visits to the parishes a week earlier. The Poles, of course, accused him of deliberately boycotting their celebrations. He now agreed to receive the President in the Cathedral with a testimonial and Solemn High Mass.

He had already carefully considered and prepared his speech of welcome, when Monsignor Michalkevičius rushed in one morning. He appeared excited and distraught. The Bishop received him in the reception room. Instead of relating the news, Michalkevičius walked up and down the room sighing and exclaiming:

"Terrible things are about to take place, your Excellency. Terrible things!"

"Please sit down and tell me about it."

He sat down and reported that the endeks threatened to prevent the Bishop from entering the Cathedral the next day. If he should try, they were intent on beating or killing him.

"Excellency, do not go to the Cathedral tomorrow. Allow me to celebrate the services."

The Bishop was quiet for a while, then very deliberately he said:

"If the endeks wish to create an incident, let them do so. But, I shall fulfill my obligation. I will celebrate the services or else there will not be any.

I forbid anyone else to celebrate them, and disobedience will incur automatic suspension from priestly duties. Please notify the entire Chapter of this."

Msgr. Michalkevičius became more calm.

When asked where he had obtained this information, he maintained he could not reveal his source, but the facts were true. Finally, he quieted down completely, bid farewell, and left.

The Bishop met the President, escorted him into the presbytery and read his speech of welcome. All listened with great interest.

The text of the speech was sent to the Vilnius press, but not one of the newspapers mentioned it, much less printed the whole text. In Warsaw, only the *Przegląd Katolicki* published the text. The others did not even acknowledge having received it.

During the testimonial dinner, the Bishop sat next to the President and spoke to him. When he returned home, he merely said:

"He is a good, upright man, but he has no special talents. He certainly is not General Pilsudski."

A SURPRISE FOR MONSIGNOR MICHALKEVIČIUS

Father Jonas kept looking through the mail every day, waiting for a letter from Rome. One day, while he was leafing through the pages of the recent copy of *Acta Apostolcae Sedis,* he un-

expectedly came upon this item: Kazimieras Mykolas Michalkevičius has been nominated titular Bishop of Thyatiros and is appointed Suffragan of Vilnius.

He at once rushed to see Bishop Matulaitis to read him the good news.

"Let us go and congratulate Msgr. Michalkevičius," said the Bishop.

They went and congratulated him. He just could not believe it. He read the official notice and gave it back to them. Michalkevičius then burst into tears and reached for the Bishop's hand. "Only because of your Excellency's extraordinary kindness has this been made possible," he cried.

It took nearly six months before the official papers arrived. The reason for the delay was that they were sent through Riga. Finally, on June 10th, Bishop Matulaitis consecrated his suffragan in the Vilnius Cathedral and gave him a testimonial dinner. The following day, a dinner was given at the residence of Bishop Michalkevičius.

Bishop Matulaitis' choice was justified. Relations with the suffragan were friendly. He was eager to serve Bishop Jurgis and defend the diocese and its Shepherd whenever he could, even before the government of Poland. Lithuanians also had no cause to complain about the new bishop.

Now that he had an assistant, Bishop Matulaitis was able to devote more time to other matters.

That year, he had to make his *ad limina* visit to Rome; that is, to give his report to the Pope about his diocese, and also to report to the Congregation of Religious about his own religious Congregation. To do this, he had to collect data from the deans, the Seminary and other institutions and, of course, from the Marian monasteries.

"I must give a report to Rome on the life of the Congregation," he writes on January 25th to Rev. Kulikauskas in Chicago, requesting him to prepare a report about the activities of the American Marians. He reminded him also to prepare for the Marian Chapter, that is, for the convocation of its representatives.

He began to plan for the Marian Chapter meeting well in advance—first by seeking a proper place to hold it. At first, he thought that it could be held in Vilnius. But the situation changed and he decided on Danzig under the auspices of Bishop O'Rourke, who was transferred from Riga to a new place.

He had intended to visit Rome by the end of April or early in May, but the work of preparation delayed him until June. All the reports did not arrive on time and, when they did, they had to be corrected. For example, the Bishop showed the report of Rev. Uszyllo about the Seminary to Father Jonas. The report, written in Latin, was beautifully typewritten but the corrections done by the Bishop quite spoiled it.

"What has Your Excellency done but destroyed such a beautifully executed piece of work!"—Father Jonas complained gently.

"True, the report looks beautiful, the grammar is correct, but you cannot call it Latin. I could not sign such a document" *(Draugas,* 1967, N 31). As for the other reports delivered by persons less familiar with the Latin language, not much could be said about them. The Bishop checked them all and corrected them, for he was a Latin expert.

A VISIT TO ROME AND THE DANZIG CHAPTER

"I was in Rome on various missions," Bishop Matulaitis wrote to Rev. K. Kulikauskas in Chicago on August 16th. "I handed in my reports on the diocese and on our Congregation. The Holy Father received me most kindly. While in Rome, I had the opportunity to find out many things. I learned how the religious rules must be renewed according to the new Canon Law and how diocesan synods should be conducted. I purchased a few good books. From Rome I went directly to Danzig for the Chapter. The results of the Chapter meeting were very good. Thanks be to God, all went smoothly and properly... We agreed to appoint you Superior of the Chicago house. Reverend Reklaitis will replace Reverend Kazakas as Novice Master. Rev. Kudirka returns to America for a time. He will bring you the decisions of the Chapter.

"While I stayed in Rome and Danzig, the workload drained all of my strength. Because of this, I have gone with Father Dvaranauskas to the Kissingen Sanatorium in Germany to recuperate. The treatments were time-consuming, but, during my free time, I corrected our Congregation's rules according to the new Canon Law. I have completed a part of the task, but there is much more to be done. Now it is permissable to incorporate into the rules a few aspects of asceticism. Therefore, I plan to include those aspects that direct the life style and that are especially characteristic of our Congregation."

As for his trip to Rome, these bits of information are found in various letters: "Yesterday, the Holy Father granted me and Rev. Prof. Būčys an audience," he writes to Bishop Pr. Karevičius on June 12th from Rome. "As I bid farewell to the Holy Father, he remembered your Excellency and also his Excellency, Bishop Skvireckas. He sends you both his greetings and his blessings. While in Rome, I learned that it would be most desirable and profitable for Lithuania to enter into a Concordat with the Apostolic See... I received great understanding, sincerity and support from many highly placed persons in Rome."

On that same day he wrote to Bishop Karosas of Vilkaviškis, extending him the greetings and blessings of the Pope and reminding him of the necessity of a Concordat. "The times are not nor-

mal and conditions are unstable. New wars are expected and many changes may take place. It would be most useful and desirable, that these events, if they become a reality, would find Lithuania with well-ordered relations between Church and the State, so that the Church would have complete freedom and full independence. It would be good to have a separate administrator in Klaipėda and the Žemaitija diocese should be divided into two dioceses of Kaunas and Šiauliai."

"THE GENTRY HAVE RISEN AGAINST ME"

Among many other things that he wrote about in his letters, he occasionally referred to his situation in Vilnius. "Here, we have the usual hardships and work," he had written to Rev. Pranas Būčys on April 9, 1922. "First, they attack and slander me. Then they grow tired, retreat and quiet down for a while. It is difficult to live and work under these conditions."

On November 21, 1923, he wrote to Rev. A. Cikota: "Recently a little lady dropped in to warn me that I would be killed in the Cathedral. I replied that I have no guards to protect me and that they can do what they want at any time. I shall remain in my place until the Holy Father commands me to leave Vilnius. The newspapers are constantly against me. All is in God's hands." Five days later he wrote again saying: "The gentry have truly risen

up against me and want to remove me from Vilnius." On November 28th, there is one short observation: "The Polish newspapers slander me as usual, but thanks be to God, I can still work."

Rev. Kriščiukaitis, his secretary, writes more concretely about these matters. The *Dziennik Wilenski* chose to slander and to attack him repeatedly. The angry vituperations printed in Vilnius against the Bishop were usually reprinted by the Warsaw and Krakow press. "The Bishop never reacted in any way against these attacks. He never allowed himself to be provoked." But he did react to two of them. The French language newspaper *Bulletin Catholique* began to be published in Warsaw. It's editor was Rev. M. Liutoslawski. The third issue of the paper attacked the bishops who had "taken a stand against the Polish people," that is Bishop Karevičius of Kaunas and Matulaitis of Vilnius. Bishop Matulaitis sent this issue of the newspaper to the Secretary of State in the Vatican, Cardinal Gasparri, with a short note: Bishops are usually instructed by the Holy Father and it is not at all normal for an ordinary priest to teach and reprimand them in public. The paper never reappeared after that and Cardinal Kakowski had to justify himself before Rome for this publication.

Another time, a Lvov diocesan official sent Bishop Matulaitis a copy of a long correspondence he had received from Vilnius. He had underlined pertinent matters. Bishop Matulaitis read it and

wrote a statement to Archbishop Bilczewski pointing out the illicitness and impropriety of such writings. The Archbishop had just died. Therefore, the suffragan Twardowski replied that the editor himself would present an explanation and an apology. The editor informed him that the correspondent was a well-known figure and had appeared to be trustworthy.

The attacks in the press were not the only ones. There were threats and accusations at public meetings. The Bishop, it was said, had been appointed by the Lithuanians in collusion with the Germans. He was an agent of Kaunas, engaged in Lithuanian politics and hated Poland, his archenemy. This was the work of the endeks who were trying to have Bishop Matulaitis removed from Vilnius.

The government only pretended to be on the side of the Bishop, but actually approved these actions by remaining silent. The clergy did the same, except for some religious who knew the Bishop personally. The Jesuits were exceptionally bitter. One day they decided to honor three martyrs, all of them Poles killed by the Bolsheviks and announced that they would hold a procession in the city. The Bishop would not grant permission for this procession and there followed a public outcry: "He is an enemy of the Poles. This Muravjov hates the Polish people and forbids a patriotic procession."

The Bishop already possessed the true facts about these so-called martyrs; one was a licentious man, another had been imprisoned for theft and the third was a public sinner. Bishop Matulaitis relayed this information to the General of the Jesuits. In turn, he removed all those Jesuits from Vilnius and replaced them with others who were more moderate and loyal.

Most painful of all was the fact that the members of the Polish Marians turned against their own General. They wrote statements to the Nuncio requesting him to influence the Holy Father to recall Bishop Matulaitis from Vilnius. The reason given for this request was that he was needed by the Congregation. But this was only a pretext. They were afraid that they would lose their popularity in the Polish community because of Bishop Matulaitis. The Nuncio sent this letter to the Bishop and he answered by saying that his presence in Vilnius did not compromise his duties as General of the Congregation. However, he expressed his submission to the Holy Father's decision

Rome also sent him the complaints it received. Among them were several complaints from the Cathedral Chapter of Vilnius. He had to explain these to Rome even though it always sided with him. Because these complaints usually came through the Polish embassy to the Vatican, Cardinal Gasparri found it necessary to make a few remarks to the ambassador Wl. Skrzynski himself. Two mem-

bers of the Polish hierarchy, Cardinal Kakowski and Bishop Przezdziecki, strongly disapproved of these complaints and were trying to silence the perpetrators.

All these happenings tired and hurt the Bishop, but he remained calm and tried not to show his discomfort to anyone. "Only once," recalled Reverend Kriščiukaitis, "when he was in the reception room, looking out of the window, the Bishop said: 'God punishes me for my sins with Vilnius,' but he controlled himself at once and changed the subject."

He tried as always to be equally fair to all. He did not change his principle, *vince in bono malum*, to conquer evil with good. He was happy to see that the ordinary people, at least, were faithful to him, but, in general, they were not Polish. He appreciated the efforts of the Lithuanians and the White Russians to defend him, even though their voices did not carry much weight. He was sorry for those honorable journalists like Rev. Toloczko and Ludwik Abramowicz who defended the Bishop at all times and were themselves called "traitors to the Polish cause."

Rumors about the possible assassination of the Bishop never ceased and Matulaitis reasoned that the atmosphere for its success was appropriate. Yet he did nothing to ensure his safety. He walked through the city as before. He said that he was prepared to die. Only when he had to travel by train

did he dress so that he would not be recognized as a bishop.

WOULD THE HOLY FATHER RECALL HIM?

A misunderstanding arose in the Rodūnė parish of the Lyda district as the Bishop was preparing to leave for Rome for his *ad limina* visit. The parish was of mixed nationalities—Lithuanian and Polish. The Polish people were causing disturbances during the Lithuanian devotions.

The Bishop sent delegates to quiet the people. Later, he sent another delegation. Nothing was achieved. It was learned that only a small group of people were involved, and they were obviously inspired by someone else. The Bishop appealed to the court of Lyda, asking it to apprehend those responsible for the disturbances.

Two months passed by. The court did nothing and the disturbances continued. Then, on February 28, 1923, the Bishop asked the prosecutor's office

of the Vilnius district court to file a suit against the culprits. This office also did nothing.

Concerned that there would be a repetitiion of this disturbance in other mixed parishes, he appealed again to the prosecutor's office of the Vilnius district court. He left for Rome taking with him this concern, since he had not received any response to this appeal.

THE AFFAIRS OF THE MARIAN CONGREGATION

In Rome, he had to take care of other matters. The Sacred Congregation for Religious was waiting for the Marian Constitutions to be amended in accordance with the new Canon Laws. The Congregation of Bishops kept urging the necessity of a diocesan synod because the postwar conditions required a readjustment of diocesan government according to the new regulations. Both were of primary importance and could not be delayed.

To hold a diocesan synod would require time for preparation. As for the Marian Constitutions, this would take only a month, two at most. Therefore, he began rivising the Constitutioins first. "Day and night I worked on the amendment of our Constitutions, whenever I could spare the time from my other duties. I never realized it would require so much effort," he writes to Rev. F. Kudirka, October 12, 1923.

It required two months before the first draft was ready. "I have finished revising our Constitutions. Father Jonas is typing them. Now, I intend to perfect them," he writes to Rev. A. Cikota on November 21st. He took the typewritten text, corrected it, crossed out and inserted items. "When I have finished with the Constitutions, I am going to start preparations for a diocesan synod," he mentioned in a letter of December 22nd to Rev. Būčys.

In the meantime, the news from Rodūnė was most alarming. The Bishop once again appealed to the prosecutor's office of the Vilnius district court, but again without any result. Then he wrote to the Minister of Justice and later to the Minister of Education and Religious affairs. He asked Nuncio Lauri to urge the government to restrain the troublemakers. He conferred with the Nuncio because he could not wait any longer, and finally decided to take action himself. The Nuncio doubted whether strict ecclesiastical penalties would have any results because the disturbances had nothing to do with liturgical matters, but with the singing of Lithuanian hymns. Bishop Matulaitis countered that the demonstrators not only interfered with the singing but also with the preaching of the Word of God. Moreover, if this matter were not settled soon, there is the danger that other parishes would be affected and then matters would grow worse.

The Nuncio gave Bishop Matulaitis a free hand

and on October 7, 1923, the Bishop temporarily closed the church and after a month he divided the parish, between the Nočia and Žirmūnai parishes. He excommunicated the rioters. The Polish press raised a furor, but the Bishop was well accustomed to all this.

He went back to work on the Marian Constitutions. On February 8, 1924, he wrote to Rev. Cikota: "I have almost finished the Constitutions. Father Jonas retyped the text and we have sent copies to America, Lithuania and Poland." The copies were only for reading and making positive suggestions.

A NEW REASON TO INFLUENCE ROME

The affairs of the Marians detained the Bishop from diocesan matters. Now there was double work to be done, so he rose earlier and shortened his rest. He was unable to set a date for the synod, but no one was worried about that. More attention was given to the fact that the Bishop, a Lithuanian, was not concerned about Polish affairs, which were more important to them than the salvation of souls.

One day, on April 3, 1924, the Bishop received a document signed by Cardinal Gasparri. The Apostolic See had been notified that due to the unrest of so many people in the diocese, arising from political conditions, perhaps the Bishop was having difficulty governing the diocese. He was requested

to state frankly and truthfully what the situation was and whether the Bishop could in conscience say that the situation was not interfering with the work of saving souls.

It was not difficult to understand that "the salvation of souls" was a pretext to influence Rome in removing the Lithuanian Bishop. Bishop Matulaitis answered immediately that there were no special obstacles of recent origin that would prevent him from fulfilling his duties as Shepherd. The difficulties were the same old ones due to the mixture of nationalities, and they kept recurring. The situation was not that bad that it would harm the salvation of souls. The faithful were not politically minded and accepted their Bishop as Shepherd. They received him with respect and enthusiasm wherever he went. During his visitation, he delivered several sermons each day and the priests can verify that the visitations were like missions. It did not appear that this activity of his could harm the Republic of Poland. The clergy were perceptibly grateful for his guidance, except for a few priests who were excessively devoted to the Polish "National Democratic" party (the endeks). The Bishop was not welcome or acceptable to the Polish government because of his nationality. However, he had fulfilled his duties up to now, and no one could accuse him of neglect.

He explained his ideas on the relations between the nationalities and the use of languages. He men-

tioned the attacks of the press about his refusal to favor one nationality and its language. If the Apostolic See thought it better that he leave Vilnius, then he would gladly do so, but would not the Apostolic See experience new hardships? In this area where the nationalities are many, the religions mixed and conditions difficult, any Bishop sent would be attacked or criticized. Whatever solution might be adopted in his regard, he requested the Holy Father to understand that he submitted fully to his decision. "Let him do with me what he thinks best."

THE BISHOP IS CAREFULLY WATCHED

Correspondence with Rome was carried on through the Nunciature and not through public channels. The Bishop's mail was being censored. Therefore, says Rev. Kriščiukaitis, it was necessary to use messengers. Only through intermediaries could the Bishop correspond with the Marians in America and Lithuania.

The Bishop was being carefully watched. The observation point, writes Rev. Kriščiukaitis, was from the house across the street, the one with the double windows. On the night of November 29, 1923, a wagon drove into the Bishop's yard. The police arrived quickly and ordered the outdoor lights to be put on. They ordered that the Bishop's wagon be unlocked. They discovered that it was

filled with cabbages and sugar beets. They dumped everything out and started to look for bombs. Since they did not find any, they left.

The wagon was from Trinapolis, the Bishop's farm. At midnight, the police appeared there and surrounded the houses, waking up the inhabitants and the orphans. They questioned the directress of the orphanage, Sister A. Kudirka, the elementary school teachers and the supervisor in order to find out where the weapons were hidden. Not receiving an answer, they began to search the buildings. They found absolutely nothing and decided to search the potato bins. They emptied out the potatoes and dug under the bins into the dirt at least a meter's depth, hoping to find a cache of hidden arms. It took them until noon before they were satisfied that there were none. On leaving, they took three of the older students, questioned them and, after a few days, released them.

When the Bishop was informed of the events, he found it hard to understand what they really were trying to achieve by these methods. A partial answer was offered by Marjan Zdziechowski, former rector of Vilnius University, who was an admirer and defender of Bishop Matulaitis. He had written in the Krakow newspaper *Czas* that one year "some unfounded rumors began to be spread about a conspiracy against the Polish and that the reins of this project were in the hands of the Bishop" (AJM, 222).

That was the year when Lithuania regained Klaipėda and the Ambassador's Conference of March 15, 1923 decided the border lines between Lithuania and Poland. Vilnius was given to Poland. This, of course, raised a great storm of protest in Lithuania and the Polish were afraid there would be some sort of reprisal by the Lithuanians in the Vilnius area. But it was strange that the rumors centered around the most peaceful of Bishops!

Bishop Matulaitis was accustomed to being called a "Kaunas agent," "a citizen of a foreign country" in the press and at public meetings. He never thought that there would be a time when the government would demand proof of his citizenship. When it was demanded, he ordered the Curia not to say or do anything. On May 4, 1924, the Bishop wanted to travel to Latvia to consecrate the suffragan of Riga, Joseph Rancans. The Curia asked the government for a foreign travel passport. They answered that the passport would be granted once the Bishop gave proof of citizenship. The chancellor was told to write a short letter to ask whether or not the passport would be granted.

After a few days, the passport was granted unconditionally. Apparently Warsaw was contacted and advised not to raise this question since there might be diplomatic complications with the Vatican.

After the consecration, the Bishop remained a few weeks longer in Riga because the Marian rep-

resentatives had arrived from Lithuania to consider several matters. When he returned to Vilnius, he was ready for parish visitations. On May 20th, a delegation arrived from Rodūnė with a request in the name of the Lithuanians and the Poles. The Bishop had to understand, they said, that the entire parish was not guilty, but only a few persons for whom the church did not mean very much. No one had asked or allowed them to desecrate the house of God and the priest. The delegation requested that a priest be appointed and the church reopened.

The Bishop pacified the delegates by asking them to wait until he had returned from his parish visitations. Then he went to the Ašmena deanery and visited parish after parish. Fatigue and heat, especially in the last part of June, consumed most of his energy. He returned to Vilnius on July 17th and invited Rev. Cikota to come and discuss the affairs of the White Russian Marians. On July 22nd, he wrote to Rev. Būčys: "I returned very tired and overworked. I intend to go to Ciekocino for a month's rest. I do not want to leave now for a foreign country in order to avoid the problem of getting another passport." He left for the sanitarium on July 25th.

IS IT TIME TO WITHDRAW?

He sent his explanation to Rome and waited for a reply. He wrote to Rev. Būčys on November

17th: "I have received no answer to my letter from Rome as yet... I would like to know if the Lithuanian government is negotiating with the Apostolic See concerning a Concordat." The Polish government was engaged in Concordat negotiations and it obviously would include the question of the diocese of Vilnius. "Latvia did not sleep," answered Rev. Būčys. "They were able to elevate their single, newly re-organized diocese of Riga to an archdiocese... Lithuania, although it is almost entirely a Catholic country, does not have an archdiocese. The Austrian, Fr. Ritter von Lama, writes that Lithuania at that time made no effort to present its case to the Vatican" (Pius XI, 349).

The Bishop wrote again to Father Būčys on December 11th, that "no answer as yet has come from Rome about my document." Actually, at this time, he was waiting for an answer from Cardinal Gasparri with regard to his remaining in Vilnius. Would the Holy Father leave him in Vilnius or recall him? Rev. Būčys remembered that once again the Bishop's leg became painful.

The uncertainty about his position and his physical disability led the Bishop to appoint Rev. Pranas Būčys as the General Vicar of the Marian Congregation and Superior of the Lithuanian and Latvian houses. He informed him of this on January 11, 1925. In the same year, on February 19th, Poland signed a Concordat with the Holy See and, according to it, Vilnius was elevated to an arch-

diocese with two subsidiary dioceses. Included in the Concordat was the condition that, before the Holy See appointed bishops, the government would be consulted concerning any political objections that it might have. It was obvious to Bishop Matulaitis that the Polish government would find political objections, were he to be considered for the position of archbishop of Vilnius. Rumors developed that should the Apostolic See wish to retain Bishop Matulaitis in Vilnius, he would be removed by force.

After Easter, in the middle of April, he went to see the Nuncio to determine his position. When he returned, he wrote a letter to the Holy Father. On May 1st, he entrusted it to a priest who was travelling to Rome so that it would be personally delivered to the Pope. "I have taken everything into consideration," writes Bishop Matulaitis, "and it seems to me that it is now time that I, for the greater good of the Church, be recalled from Vilnius... The Poles have never accepted me because I am a Lithuanian bishop in their Polish republic. They are determined at all costs, now that the diocese has been raised to the rank of an archdiocese, that I not remain here as archbishop. The political parties, especially the "National Democrats" which are very strong in the republic, have, with their constant attacks against me, false accusations and slanders, succeeded in influencing many of the Polish people to look at me with suspicion and

distrust. This distrust is perceptibly increasing and there is no hope of it diminishing. I see that I have become unacceptable to the government. It does not trust me, either. Conditions being such, it is obvious that I cannot freely fulfill my duties as I should, nor have the necessary influence over my people. I make this request not just to rid myself of the cross which God's goodness has placed upon me, but simply because I desire the greater glory of God and the good of the Church. However, I place myself completely in your hands, Holy Father, and give myself up to your will. You know, my Beloved Father, that I am resolved to suffer everything for Christ and his Church."

BOOK SHIPMENTS TO LITHUANIA

Bishop Matulaitis was certain that he would be leaving Vilnius soon, and so he became concerned over his collection of Lithuanian books, which now had grown considerably. He wrote to Rev. Būčys, on April 10, 1925: "As you know, I have quite a few books. I think I shall send them to you. The local Polish library has agreed to help."

Concerning the task of creating a central Lithuanian Marian library, he wrote on November 1, 1922 to Rev. F. Kudirka in Chicago: "As far as possible, we would like to collect everything that has been published in Lithuanian, for the monas-

tery of Marijampolė. This should include books, brochures, newspapers, even declarations and also whatever has been published in foreign languages about Lithuania and Lithuanians. Collect all the American newspapers and books published in Lithuanian. Father Kriščiukaitis has found many important, expensive and rare books with material about Lithuania's history in stores and second-hand bookshops and also quite a few volumes in Lithuanian."

There were 93 large boxes of Lithuanian books sent from Vilnius to Marijampolė (*Draugas*, 1967, N 36) that made up the basic collection, which increased to 50,000 volumes.

THE BISHOP LEAVES QUIETLY

Lithuania was slow in drawing up a Concordat with the Apostolic See, even though she was governed by a Catholic party. When the Poles had signed their Concordat, the Lithuanians protested that the Vatican had handed over Vilnius to Poland. Kaunas was outraged and demonstrated against the papal delegates.

"I have heard that people are in an uproar in Kaunas over the Concordat," Matulaitis wrote to Rev. Būčys on May 19th. "Do not get involved in political quarrels and fights. Restrain our people from them... Calm them down wherever you can, for it seems to me that there is little reason to get so upset."

The Bishop did not know then that the Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr. J. Purickis, had delivered

a most insulting note to the Vatican, and "the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop A. Zecchini, was under such awkward circumstances that he had to leave Kaunas; in the spring of 1925, he went back to Rome" (Pius XI, 352).

WAITING FOR AN ANSWER FROM ROME

The Apostolic See had informed the Lithuanian delegation which had arrived in Rome at the end of 1924 that, since the political boundaries had been changed, the ecclesiastical regions would be automatically changed too. This principle had been included in the Concordat with Poland (ibid. 352). It was the misbehaviour of the Lithuanians, according to Rev. Būčys, that shocked and embittered the Vatican diplomats. "Sympathy for Lithuania, which had been great in the Vatican, now remained in the heart of the Pope alone" (ibid).

The Pope understood the situation under which Bishop Matulaitis had to live. But why was the answer to the request to recall him from Vilnius not forthcoming? Perhaps new fears and precautions had developed. If the Lithuanian bishop were to be recalled, would not this cause another uproar in Lithuania? Bishop Matulaitis kept waiting for some kind of sign and, in his letters, he often referred to his situation: "So far, I have received no news of what will become of me."

Still without news, he went to Warsaw on May 22nd to participate in the Bishops' Conference. The main theme of the Conference was the Concordat agreement. No one, except the Nuncio, knew about his proposal to withdraw. He had not even mentioned this to his friend from his student days, Bishop Przezdziecki.

Matulaitis returned to Vilnius on May 30th, not having obtained any definite information. He hastened to take care of various diocesan affairs, since he intended to go to Ciekocino on July 7th for reasons of health. Finally, in the middle of June, he received a note from Cardinal Gasparri through the Nuncio. The Cardinal informed the Nuncio that the request of the Bishop of Vilnius had been received by the Holy Father. He asked Bishop Matulaitis to understand that the Holy See fully appreciated the increasing difficulties that surrounded him. He [Cardinal Gasparri] has never had any basis to question his behavior in governing the diocese under such difficult circumstances, nor has he paid any attention to the accusations which his enemies brought against him; rather he had defended him. However, if Bishop Matulaitis, because of the difficulties in which he finds himself, wishes to resign, he can with complete openness make this request to His Holiness, explaining the reasons for his wish; and the Holy See would take the matter under consideration.

Bishop Matulaitis could not help wondering

why it was necessary to ask again and to explain his reason anew. However, he wrote again and, on June 27th, sent the Holy Father a new request. He began with the current political circumstances.

"Recently, there had been a war between Poland and Lithuania. The Lithuanians have not renounced their right to Vilnius and the surrounding areas. The Polish, however, are trying to prove to the entire world that this city and its area are truly Polish. They are attempting to polonize all non-Poles as quickly as possible, employing every means, even force, to do so. All this contributes toward making the position of the Bishop, who is a Lithuanian, extraordinarily difficult. Even more so, because in this area the Poles comprise the majority group and are in control. For these reasons, and because I am a Lithuanian, I have become intolerable in the eyes of the Poles. On the other hand, the Polish people's greatest desire is to have a Polish bishop here in Vilnius.

"When the Germans occupied the area, almost all the nationalities here had equal status. At this time, the Poles required only one thing from me—that I treat all equally. They acknowledged that I, even though a Lithuanian, had been fair to all. Yet later, when they themselves had taken over this area, their political parties, especially the one called "The National Democrats", which was most influential with the government, began to attack me violently and systematically by every means avail-

able, both in the newspapers and in public meetings... They have been so successful that, in the eyes of many, I am a kind of ogre, breathing hatred and destruction for all Poles.

"The truth is that I am continually being hindered in my work as Bishop. So often I have been pressured from all sides by difficulties that at times it seemed that I would not be able to withstand them and would capitulate, if I had not been strengthened by Christ and his Cross and by my obedience to the Holy See. Whatever happens, the longer these conditions continue, the sadder will be the results for everyone, for because of these conflicts with the Bishop, God is offended, many souls are hurt and confused, the Bishop's authority is lessened and his ruling power weakened and very often the Holy See itself is impugned.

"As long as this situation was not fully clarified, with sincerity I reported to the Holy See that perhaps it was not yet timely nor necessary to recall me from Vilnius. Now, however, once the Concordat has been signed, ecclesiastical affairs have been reorganized and restabilized, I have weighed all things seriously before God and realize that the time has now arrived that I be recalled from Vilnius.

"My Beloved Father, I have experienced your many kindnesses and realize with what fatherly love and concern you have defended me. The document which eternally proves to me your kindness

is the letter you sent to me, your humble servant, upon assuming the papal throne. Here it is believed and affirmed that I have not only Your personal confidence but even more than that—also your friendship. It was through God's help and your goodness and kindness that I was able to fulfill my duties under such difficulties. My enemies, who have so often threatened me, nevertheless did not dare to carry out their plans. . ."

"I wonder at the corruption in people. There is no necessity to look far to see it. Being the Nuncio to Poland you have experienced it yourself. You tried to do only what was good, you showed everyone the greatest of love and goodwill. Though you loved the Polish nation and did so much good for her, yet, you were attacked with viciousness, violence and injustice. You were innocent and unable to defend yourself."

Once released from Vilnius, Matulaitis requested the Pope to allow him to live in Rome and look after the affairs of the Marian Congregation.

RELEASED, HE GOES TO ROME

That spring, he could not visit the parishes. He was physically incapable. "I leave for Ciekocinko for treatment and to get rest," he wrote on July 7th to Rev Būčys. "I may be able to go to Rome." He went to Ciekocinko on July 12th and a week

later again wrote to him. "The doctors have found that I am overfatigued. In addition I have my usual illnesses. What will happen to me I do not know, for as yet I have received no news... I expect to receive news this month or in August, at the latest. Once I am free of Vilnius, I would like to live in Rome. God grant me to found a house of studies there and a monastery which would serve as the administrative center for the Congregation."

"The cure is progressing just fine and I feel rested," he writes to Father Jonas in Vilnius. "I have been to see the Nuncio. I predict that I will be released from Vilnius. Perhaps I will receive the news soon. I may have to go back to Vilnius for a while, but after that, it is off to Rome. This information is confidential to avoid any unpleasantness."

After he had left the sanitarium, he stopped at the Nuncio's and was handed Cardinal Gaspari's letter dated July 14th. The Cardinal, among other things, wrote: "It was most unpleasant for His Holiness to learn from your letter that you once again requested leave from your duties of ruling the diocese of Vilnius. Nevertheless, the reasons which you presented were so realistic and serious that the Holy Father holds it his duty to grant your wish. This is an official notification that His Holiness accepts your resignation and allows you, as requested, to leave at once for Rome and reside there."

Matulaitis returned first to Vilnius as he had promised. No one realized that now he was just a guest there. Only Father Jonas knew. He discussed urgent matters with him. Then quietly, without anyone's knowledge, on August 1st, he left for Warsaw. Here he wrote to the Cathedral Chapter informing them of his resignation and suggested that they elect an administrator for the diocese until a new Ordinary was appointed. He wrote short letters of farewell to Bishop Michalkevičius and Bishop Bandurski, to Monsignor Hanusowicz, Chancellor L. Chalecki and Rev. A. Viskantas. For the Minister of Education and Religious affairs, he prepared and mailed an announcement of his resignation from his duties as bishop of the diocese.

On August 3rd, when the Polish Concordat became effective, he boarded a train and left Poland, reaching Rome at noon on August 5th. He stayed with the Polish Resurrectionists in their monastery in Piazza di Spagna, deliberately so the Poles would not think he no longer wanted to have anything to do with them. Here Matulaitis met an old acquaintance, Archbishop J.B. Ciepliak who had been a colleague professor at St. Petersburg, later Suffragan of Mogiliav and then its Archbishop from 1914. He was imprisoned by the Bolsheviks, condemned to death and, only in 1924, allowed to leave Russia. Bishop Matulaitis did not suspect that this bishop-martyr would soon be appointed to replace him in Vilnius.

The first night in Rome was short. He arose at 3:30 a.m. to write a letter. First he wrote to Rev. Būčys: "I am now in Rome. I am trying to obtain an audience with the Holy Father. I would like to start a *Collegium Marianum* for our own Congregation—a House of Studies, this year before fall... Should the Lithuanian newspapers inappropriately explain my release from Vilnius, or dare make reproaches to the Holy Father, inform them that my decision could not have been different. I could not remain there any longer."

He wrote a few more letters, among them one to his Polish friend, the former Rector of Vilnius University, Professor M. Zdziechowski.

THE FIRST ATTEMPTS AT RECONCILIATION

At dawn, he celebrated Mass, mailed his letters and walked through the streets. The Romans were still asleep, or had not returned from vacation. Only tourists and pilgrims speaking various languages scurried about. After breakfast he went over to the Vatican. The more important people were not yet in their offices. In the secretariat, he found one Monsignor and, in conversation with him, ascertained that the Polish administration really had made attempts to transfer him to Częstachowa.

He took the opportunity to visit the Polish embassy near the Vatican. He did not find the ambassador, but the secretary and an advisor were there.

He informed them that he was not returning to Vilnius. The embassy official tried to explain that the Polish government had nothing against him as a bishop. They maintained that they had even defended him in their reports to the Apostolic See. They had only wanted him to go to Częstachowa. Bishop Matulaitis replied that he was familiar with the reasons and only wanted to live peacefully with the Poles. He had no intention of taking revenge on anyone.

On August 13th, he had an audience with Pope Pius XI. They met like two old friends. The Pope appreciated his sacrifice, for the Polish government would certainly have opposed his elevation as Archbishop of Vilnius. He reassured him that he could remain in Rome to care for his Congregation and promised to help him get established.

Bishop Matulaitis received a letter from Professor M. Zdziechowski. The Professor regretted his withdrawal from Vilnius and expressed the hope that he would soon be elevated to a higher rank. Bishop Matulaitis thanked him for his good-will and love during those days when "others threw mud at me and boycotted me," but explained that he "did not leave Vilnius because of the slanders. Circumstances demanded it." He repeated that he prayed and would continue to pray for those who had contrived against him. He had come to Rome to serve God and hoped that all kinds of honors would by-pass him (AJM, 223).

During the Holy Year, there were many groups of pilgrims in Rome. There was also a large group from Poland. The Pope celebrated Mass for them and received them in an audience. Along with the visitors were present Polish representatives from the Embassy and from various religious congregations. To the surprise of everyone, Bishop Matulaitis attended both the Mass and the audience. He wished to show that he held no hard feelings towards the Polish people. He wrote in his diary after the audience: "May Almighty God bless them all and grant them the best of everything. Recalling those last days, the evil I suffered was not the work of the Polish people, but that of politics and of certain parties. I pray for them also and promise to continue to pray for them with all my heart." On October 27th, in a letter to Rev. Būčys, he pointed out: "I have tried and I will try to forgive and pardon everyone, should any hard feelings have arisen in my heart toward them."

HE RETURNS TO "AGE QUOD AGIS"

Since he had reconciled himself with the Poles and had forgiven them, on August 21st he went to the Benedictines near St. Paul's Basilica to make a retreat. He prayed and meditated for ten days. Then he wrote to Rev. Būčys: "After leaving Vilnius I felt a great need for a retreat in order to set the past in perspective so that I could peace-

fully begin my new life... I really was able to compose myself and with complete confidence in God's providence and the Holy Virgin's protection, I courageously begin my new work. Here, without doubt, as everywhere, I will go the way of the cross, as God wills" (3, IX).

After making the retreat, he went to live with the Franciscans. He was now informed that the Pope, on September 1st, had raised him to be the titular Archbishop of Adulia. The official announcement would be made at the Consistory on December 14th. In his small monastery cell, he began to study Italian. "Now, after the retreat, I am studying Italian from morning to night," he wrote to Rev. Būčys.

The Cardinals began to return from their vacations early in October. He decided to pay visits to some of them, first to Cardinal Gasparri. Meanwhile, by force of habit, he stopped at various libraries and second-hand bookstores. When he found something rare, he could not restrain himself from purchasing it for the Marian library.

The needs of Lithuania began to concern him much more now. He had received news that Rev. Dr. M. Reinys, who had been one of his priests in Vilnius, and later a professor at the University of Kaunas, had become the Minister of Foreign Affairs, succeeding J. Purickis. At first he doubted whether it was proper for him to undertake this position, but then he read in the Vatican newspaper,

Osservatore Romano, an article about Lithuania in which they had reacted favorably towards Rev. Reinys. It was hoped that after he assumed his duties as Foreign Affairs Minister, relations with the Vatican would be renewed and rectified. He informed Rev. Būčys about this article (October 16th) and added: "... God grant that Lithuania will make a Concordat with the Holy Father. If relations are not rectified with the Apostolic See, it would not be fitting for him, Rev. Reinys, to continue as Minister... It is sad that Lithuania remains in a state of war with the Apostolic See, since we have the Christian Democrats ruling the country... It is my opinion that it is time now to begin negotiating with the Apostolic See. There is no reason to delay any longer." He went on to add: "If I can be of any assistance, I would be willing to help conciliate these relations."

Another of his immediate concerns was to establish a central Marian monastery in Rome. Therefore, he recalled his Marian Father, Rev. Reklaitis, from America. Rev. Reklaitis had completed his studies in Rome, knew the Italian language very well and had made many acquantances there. Matulaitis thought that there should be a House of Studies attached to the central monastery. He had in mind a few candidates among the Poles, the Lithuanians, the Latvians and the White Russian Marians who would profit greatly by studying in the universities of Rome. Their religious formation

and growth in community life could also be continued here.

"The Marian Congregation," according to Rev. Būčys "was the most beloved of Bishop J. Matulaitis' projects. Indeed, he had revived it for the Lithuanians, but he constantly kept expanding it to all nationalities. When some objected, he replied, "that he had founded a Catholic Congregation and that a religious Congregation deviates from its purpose when it limits itself exclusively to one nationality" (AJM, 32). "We must endeavor to serve all nationalities, he had written to Rev. V. Kulikauskas in Chicago on May 1, 1923. "Two Latvians have already entered in Marijampolė. We will be able to establish a Latvian house. We have White Russians as well... I cannot thank God enough that in such a short time He has given us so much to do. A few years ago we began our work with nothing and now we have so much."

The Polish and Lithuanian Marians were now sufficiently strong enough to stand on their own feet. The Polish had three houses in Poland, the Lithuanians two, one in Marijampolė and one in Chicago. Both branches were independent. They had their own novitiates, high schools and were ready to open printeries. (In Chicago the daily newspaper *Draugas* was being published). The Latvians had formed a house in Vilianai where a few priests and brothers lived. Thus, each branch of the Congregation served its own nationality.

It was more difficult for the White Russians. Bishop Matulaitis had organized their Center in Druja with the help of Rev. A. Cikota in 1923. At the same time, they founded a White Russian religious Community for women under the protection of the Marians. (Their constitutions were approved by Rome in 1924). The American Lithuanian Marians helped to support the Druja Center and thus they were able to obtain a building, buy a printing press and were about to start the publication of their own newspaper. However, the Polish government witheld permission. "They are afraid of the White Russians like a plague, but the obstacles will be overcome gradually," Matulaitis wrote to Rev. Kulikauskas on November 28th, 1924. As long as he was Bishop of Vilnius, he was able to help and protect them. Now, it was uncertain how they would manage. Then a new idea began to develop. If they were unable to function in Poland, they could be trained for Missions in Russia.

EFFORTS TO RETURN BISHOP MATULAITIS TO LITHUANIA

It seems that even in Lithuania rumors had him being appointed Archbishop to Lithuania. But Rev. Justinas Staugaitis warned that, should the Holy Father do this, the Lithuanian government would deny him a visa to Lithuania and a new scandal would arise.

He wrote to Rev. Būčys, on November 9th and on December 3rd, and expressed his reactions to the latter's letter: "Your recent letter amazed me very much and even frightened me. I have always helped you avoid becoming bishop and you, as I understand it, are suggesting that I be made archbishop. Remember that we have both promised to avoid all manner of elevations and high positions. True, our obligation is to serve the Church with our entire strength, but as *religious*, we are called, not to rule the Church, but only to serve its leaders. Our field is not Church politics but the strengthening of Christ's Spirit."

"It is good to learn that you are serving Msgr. Faidutti but not so good that you are allowing yourself to be involved in Church politics. This is not our true objective... I was not in my proper field when in Vilnius. If all of you agreed to place me in a similar position again, I doubt whether I would be of any use for the glory of God. I would feel out of place, torn from my own immediate vocation."

"Lithuania has many people and it would not be difficult to find a proper candidate for archbishop... but whom will you find to take my place? Actually, remaining here in Rome, I can perhaps also serve the Church of Lithuania. If the politics of Lithuania is to develop realistically, then everything should be done to have me stay in Rome and allow me to work in peace. Lithuanians are needed

in Rome too; students are needed and also good priests and good Catholics.

"My case is being discussed among the ministers of state, it seems. I have received reliable information that those who control the politics of Lithuania have decided not to grant me a visa, should the Holy Father at this time appoint me to Lithuania as Archbishop.

"I have received an offer from the Vatican to go to Lithuania as its Visitator. I have accepted and when I receive a visa from Lithuania, I will go. I feel that this task, God willing, I can fulfill. I could serve the Church in this way, and the Congregation will not suffer... I expect to receive news from P. Čarneckis (Lithuania's envoy to the Italian government) whether I will obtain a visa to Lithuania. Should they refuse to grant me a visa as Visitator, they would be making a great mistake."

HE ARRIVES AS THE POPE'S DIPLOMAT

It was not expected that once the Apostolic delegate, Archbishop Zecchini, had left Lithuania, the Vatican would appoint as its representative a native of the country to which he was sent. "In the entire history of the Church," according to Rev. Pranas Būčys, "this is only the second time it has happened" (Pius XI, 354). How did this come about and why? Rev. Būčys mentioned that Matulaitis was frequently invited by the Pope to speak with him on Lithuanian affairs (ibid. 535). This proved to be a significant fact.

There were many ecclesiastical matters that needed to be attended to in Lithuania and no one else was as well-qualified as a native of that country, a person of wide experience and perspicacity who could understand and decide these matters.

The Pope offered Matulaitis this mission and, on December 7, 1925, officially appointed him Apostolic Visitator to Lithuania.

FIRST VISITS AND IMPRESSIONS

Lithuania had submitted two requests to the Vatican. The first request came from Bishop Pranciškus Karevičius, asking for the division of his diocese into two separate dioceses. The second request was from Bishop A. Karosas, Bishop P. Karevičius and Canon J. Kukta, the administrator of that part of the diocese of Vilnius which was in Lithuania. They were asking that an ecclesiastical province be established in Lithuania.

Archbishop Matulaitis' mission was to attend to these diocesan matters. He wrote to Rev. Būčys on December 7th: "The Holy Father has sent me to Lithuania to regulate and supervise the redistribution of territory among the dioceses."

After his appointment, he celebrated Mass in the Church of the Twelve Apostles and then went to see the Envoy, Mr. V. Čarneckis, at the Lithuanian Embassy. He was warned that, more than likely, the Lithuanian government would deny him a visa. The Envoy telegraphed the Foreign Affairs Minister in Lithuania and, upon receiving an affirmative answer, issued a visa.

Matulaitis saw the Pope in an audience and, on the following day, left for Lithuania. He had

forewarned Rev. Būčys not to arrange any reception for him, so that he arrived in Kaunas unannounced and stopped at the Marian Fathers' residence at 61 *Laisvė* (Liberty) Avenue. The Pope, when he bid farewell, reminded him that so far no group of pilgrims had come from Lithuania for the Holy Year. Bishop Matulaitis at once arranged for a group to go to Rome.

Archbishop Matulaitis presented his Visitator's credentials on December 13th to Bishop Karosas and Bishop Karevičius. He sent a copy of these, together with an explanatory letter, to the Prime Minister, Dr. Leonas Bistras. The latter, according to Rev. Būčys, was delighted over Archbishop Matulaitis' arrival; however, some of the ruling party members of the Parliament expressed their dissatisfaction. "The dissatisfied politicians actually wanted to hinder the work of the Visitator" (Pius XI, 354).

Matulaitis made the required visits to familiarize himself with the prevailing attitude and with the field of work which awaited him. He wrote to Rev. Reklaitis in Rome on December 18th: "I am going to have many difficulties and many crosses... I have hopes that God will help me to rectify many things."

He went to Marijampolė on December 20th and remained overnight. A group of priests, brothers, twenty candidates and seventeen novices greeted him. Father Jonas was there, having returned from Vilnius. Matulaitis suggested the transfer of

the Novitiate to Ukmergė. He advised the priests who had become very numerous in Marijampolė to look for alternative positions in the Diocese of Žemaitija. He had always urged them to publish a newspaper, and now it was decided to publish the weekly magazine, *Šaltinis*.

The Sisters' Community had also enjoyed an increase in membership. He suggested that a few sisters be sent to Kaunas for further studies. He also met with Sister A. Kudirka who had come from Trinapolis.

PROBLEMS IN REDISTRICTING THE DIOCESES

On his first visit to the Foreign Affairs Minister, writes Rev. Dr. Reinys, the Visitator complained that the former leaders did not try to enter into a Concordat with Rome before the Poles. Three stages were discussed for restoring relations with the Vatican: to establish an ecclesiastical province; to choose mutual representatives; and to prepare the Concordat (AJM, 99).

Matulaitis conferred both with the Bishops and the government on the establishment of the ecclesiastical province. The most sensitive problem was that portion of the Vilnius diocese which had now been assigned to Lithuania. The government did not want a separate diocese to be established there. They wanted it to remain as before, as an administrative area, so that when the city of Vil-

nius was regained, the entire area would then return to Vilnius diocese.

Another sensitive problem was Klaipėda. The Catholics belonged to the Ermland diocese of Germany, but had to be released from it. The statutes of Klaipėda called for ecclesiastical autonomy. It was not possible to establish a separate diocese, for the Catholics were not numerous—about 6,000 in four parishes (the majority of the people in the area were Protestant). It was agreed to establish Klaipėda as a vicariate.

Lithuania had been left with only half of the Seinai diocese. The government wanted the old title to remain as evidence that they did not approve of the unjustly occupied area. However, it would have been improper to name a diocese after a city which *de facto* belonged to another state (Poland). The name of Sūdavija was suggested. Bishop Matulaitis wrote thus to the Prime Minister with regard to this new name: "The name Sūdavija is of ancient and unknown origin, coming, perhaps, from Isrutis and other existing German districts. As such, it is an improper name for a Lithuanian diocese." The Bishop of Seinai, Antanas Karosas, expelled by the Polish, had taken residence in Marijampolė, but the Chapter and the deans had chosen Vilkaviškis as the center of this diocese and it remained such in the plans that were drawn up.

It was agreed to divide the diocese of Žemaitija into three, rather than two, dioceses, namely:

Telšiai, Panevėžys and Kaunas. Kaunas would be the archdiocese. The ecclesiastical province would be called Kauniškė (Kaunensis). On February 25th, the Agricultural Minister, Mykolas Krupavičius, in the name of the whole nation, publicly declared that the name of Lithuania (Lituana) was preferred. Archbishop Matulaitis asked the Prime Minister, Dr. Bistras, this question: "Is this the consensus of the government? The Apostolic See would withdraw the name suggested by the bishops, if there were a clear and true basis for such a step. Your Excellency's official answer could provide this basis. It would not make much difference to the Holy Father, or to the Church whether the province is called *Kaunensis* or *Lituana*." The Prime Minister and the majority of the cabinet were apparently of a different opinion than the Minister of Agriculture. The name of Kaunas was retained.

NOMINATIONS FOR BISHOPS

Three Ordinaries and an Archbishop were needed for the new dioceses. Rome's choice to head the archdiocese of Kaunas was Matulaitis and the bishops of Lithuania agreed to this. Matulaitis, however, refused and suggested other candidates in his place.

The government wanted to express its opinion about the candidates. When he learned of this, Archbishop Matulaitis on March 1st wrote to the

Prime Minister: "The Holy Father did not empower me to negotiate with the government concerning the persons suitable to assume leadership of the newly reorganized dioceses . . . Therefore, if your Excellency wishes to express to the Head of the Catholic Church your views concerning the qualifications of the candidates for the higher positions in the Church, you must do this directly to the Holy Father or to his representatives through your own representatives."

It was no simple matter to coordinate the interests of all and satisfy everybody. "I have so much work, worries and hindrances here that it is difficult even to describe them," he wrote to Rev. Reklaitis on January 3rd. On January 30th he observed: "During the first month I had so many worries and so much work that only one night was I able to sleep six hours. Most of the time, I would get only three to five hours of sleep. I have seen an enormous number of people and completed numerous tasks. Thanks be to God, things have turned for the better, but there is still much to be done."

"They are pressing me to return to Rome." He intended to leave February 17th (1925), but doubted whether he could make it on time. New things which would require his attention had begun to develop. The Book of Rites for the new ecclesiastical province was not yet prepared and it had to be brought to Rome for confirmation. Others were preparing it, not he, himself. The theology-

philosophy department had existed now for four years, but it did not have the approval of Rome to grant academic degrees. At the request of Rev. Būčys, Dean of the Faculty, Matulaitis "thoroughly examined the state of the entire department." Then he prepared a statement for the Congregation of Studies (Pius XI, 360).

Archbishop Matulaitis also undertook the reorganization of the Center for Catholic Action in Lithuania according to Pope Pius XI's ideas and the example of other Catholic countries. But there was little time left, and he did not complete this task.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE IS ESTABLISHED

Matulaitis returned to Rome on March 5th and began to visit the various Vatican offices. His first impressions did not promise much. Things began to take a better turn once he had an audience with the Pope on March 13th. "His Holiness was most satisfied with my work," he wrote to Rev. V. Kulikauskas in America. "I had found a terrible and distressing situation concerning Church matters in Lithuania... I was able to accomplish a great deal and rectify many things. If, here in Rome, His Holiness does all that is necessary for the Church of Lithuania, then truly a new page of Church history will begin."

The next day he wrote to Bishop Skvireckas:

"The Holy See wants to satisfy as much as possible both the bishops and the government requirements." However, there were two difficulties. The Vatican did not wish to retain Kaišiadoriai as an administrative area, but rather to make it a full diocese so that, if and when circumstances changed, its boundaries could be adjusted accordingly. Matulaitis telegraphed this fact to the Foreign Affairs Minister and asked him to confer with the President. He, in turn, acknowledged that "otherwise nothing would be accomplished" and the decision itself was not in any way injurious to Lithuania.

Matulaitis thus obtained an agreement with the government over Kaišiadoriai and moved on to settle the Klaipėda affairs.

"I did everything possible," he wrote on April 6th to the Foreign Affairs Minister. "In essence, all the major objectives have been accomplished." In fact, on April 4th, the Apostolic Constitution *Lituanorum gente* (The Nation of Lithuania) establishing the ecclesiastical province was signed. The following day the new bishops and an archbishop were appointed. The writing of the Constitution took time. Several editions appeared. There was much work and hardship until the final edition was completed.

"I had a great deal of work. It was difficult and fatiguing. I hardly found free time for myself," he wrote to his close friend, Rev. Būčys, on March 29th. "My heart and nerves, I feel, have suffered

even more than in Lithuania. My sole consolation was prayer." His strength was weakened by influenza which he had contracted. He already assumed that he would not be able to greet all the new bishops, but somehow he found enough strength to write to them all, for "the best and the most suitable persons were chosen from among those available in Lithuania." He had a warm word for each one, especially for Bishop Paltarokas: "I have always held Your Excellency in high esteem and I am convinced that no better candidate for a bishop could be found."

Rev. Reklaitis searched for a house in Rome, suitable for a monastery. He found an inexpensive, comfortable villa with an adjacent garden. "If we are successful in establishing a house here," Matulaitis wrote to Rev. Būčys, "we are sure to have candidates... I have spoken to one German priest and he wishes to enter along with his friend. Both are preparing for mission work in Russia." This work area had long been one of his concerns. "I have been thinking and speaking about missionary work in Russia," he wrote to the White Russian, Rev. Cikota on April 9th, "but, I will only be able to seriously consider this matter after I have returned from America. I hope that God will help me. After all, it is His concern too. Rest assured, your time will come for missionary work. Prepare yourselves for it." He added: "Indeed, I was most fortunate in being able to avoid being appointed Archbishop

of Kaunas. Nor was Rev. Būčys appointed a Bishop. I can now completely serve the Congregation for I have finished my task in Lithuania."

He had written earlier to Rev. Būčys on March 29th, "I was offered the Archbishopric of Kaunas, but I realized full well that this would not be the right thing for me. Now there is no such danger, nor for you either. There are many others who can be bishops besides ourselves. God has assigned us other tasks."

Archbishop Matulaitis had been invited to America by Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago. He had also been requested to deliver a lecture at the Eucharistic Congress on the possibility of unity between the Eastern and Western Churches. He asked the Pope for permission to travel to America and was granted it. Yet, there were still so many unfinished matters in Rome.

The Book of Rites which he had brought with him for confirmation was not in harmony with the new Canon Law. He had to rewrite the returned draft. "I found many unnecessary entries and those that should have been there were missing entirely." He researched legal and liturgical books and rewrote the Book of Rites. He then presented it to the authorities. "We expect it to be approved very soon."

As for the theology department in the University: "I have been to the Congregation of Studies several times and twice went to see His Eminence,

Cardinal Bisletti. I have presented him statements of explanation and it seems that nothing else will be needed. Now we have to wait for the meeting of the cardinals," he wrote to Bishop Skvireckas on March 25th. "The Congregation of Studies did not want to make any exceptions for Kaunas. The Paris Catholic Institute had to wait six years for the very same rights." Later he wrote to Rev. Būčys: "Pope Pius XI ordered the rights to be granted without any further delay" (Pius XI, 360). In fact, according to his own discretion, the Pope had granted these rights only in twenty cases (Letter to Bishop Skvireckas, IV. 16).

He was now ready to return to Kaunas. Matulaitis received authorization to continue negotiations with the government of Lithuania with regard to the exchange of representatives and to prepare the Concordat. His primary task, which he had successfully inaugurated, was nearing completion. Now he had the full rights of an Apostolic Visitator.

On April 19th, the Pope received him again. This time, Archbishop Karevičius was present. Toward evening, both were on their way to Kaunas.

SUCCESS IN SIGHT

This time the returning Visitator was greeted differently. "They greeted me ceremoniously in Kybartai and at other stations. There were many peo-

ple at the Kaunas railroad station. It was raining. This prevented them from greeting me as they had planned," he wrote on May 3rd to Rev. Reklaitis.

The consecration of the new bishops was to take place now and he had to conduct some of these ceremonies himself. He had requested that all be consecrated together, but the decision had been made to be consecrated individually.

The high point of these ceremonies was to be the proclamation of the institution of the new ecclesiastical province of Lithuania and the investiture of the new metropolitan archbishop. "On the 13th of this month there will be a solemn proclamation and inauguration of the Constitution, *Lituanorum Gente*, in the Kaunas Cathedral," Matulaitis wrote to Rev. Reklaitis on May 6th. "The government will perhaps take advantage of this occasion to restore normal relations with the Holy Father."

The solemnities were attended by the representatives of the government together with a large crowd of people, all the bishops and many priests from all parts of Lithuania. Everyone listened to the Papal Constitution as it was read publicly and then to Archbishop Jurgis, the Apostolic Visitator, who read the act of its inauguration, which he himself had written:

> "By this act it is declared and ordered that in all the territories which comprise the boundaries of the Republic of Lithuania, there is now formed an independent ecclesiastical

province and this is composed of the Archdiocese of Kaunas as the metropolis and of the following dioceses: Telšiai with the prelature of Klaipėda and Panevėžys, Vilkaviškis and Kaišiadoriai as suffragans. It is ordered that in all matters the Constitution *Lituanorum Gente* be strictly and exactly observed."

The representatives of the government also participated at the banquet held in the priests' Seminary. The Prime Minister, Dr. L. Bistras, presented the Visitator with an album of crosses of Lithuania, which contained the dedication and the signatures of high officials. The center of attention was the newly invested metropolitan Archbishop Skvireckas. Archbishop Matulaitis spoke a few words ending with the hope that, strengthened in spirit, the Lithuanians would grow strong in other respects as well—both as a nation and a state. "Be happy and grateful to the Holy Father for his fatherly concern and goodwill. Let us begin a new life now, a true Catholic spiritual life. Unite and gather around your bishops and grow strong in spirit" (Letters: manuscript, 513).

The following day, May 14th, the Visitator called the first Bishops' Conference of the province and presided over it. The Constitution had granted him the power over a period of six months to supervise and set in motion the activities of the province and, if some difficulty or opposition developed, to make definitive decisions. The Conference last-

ed two days. There were various reorganizational tasks to be attended to. Archbishop Matulaitis was concerned, among other things, that the new Church province should not overburden the government's budget. He, therefore, advised against the opening of new seminaries, but to be content, for the time being, with the one in Kaunas and also to be satisfied with advisors, thus postponing the establishment of diocesan Chapters.

The government had hopes that the elections to Parliament, which were to end in the middle of May, would not bring any surprises. Then it promised to begin negotiations with the Apostolic See. At the conclusion of the Bishops' Conference, it was learned that the Catholic block had lost the elections. "The victory of the opposition was facilitated by the internal discord of the Catholics" (Draugas, 1926, No. 115). As it awaited the forthcoming changes, the government hesitated to begin negotiations with the Holy See. They gave their final decision to negotiate only after several days had gone by.

Matulaitis informed Cardinal Gasparri of the situation and reminded him that soon he was to leave for the Eucharistic Congress in Chicago and expected to make a short stop in Paris.

VISITING THE LITHUANIANS IN AMERICA

The Eucharistic Congress in Chicago was timed to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Ameri-

ca's independence. Bishops from all countries were invited to attend. The episcopate of Lithuania authorized Archbishop Matulaitis to represent Lithuania. The American-Lithuanians took this opportunity to invite him to visit their parishes. Two American priests paid the expenses of the trip for Matulaitis and his companion, Rev. P. Būčys.

They left Kaunas on May 26th. In Paris, Matulaitis inquired at the Nunciature whether there were any messages for the Apostolic Visitator of Lithuania. There was a telegram from Cardinal Gasparri: "The Apostolic See expresses its gratitude that Lithuania has re-established relations with it and is determined to establish an Internunciature in Lithuania. As for the candidate, the Pope reserves the right to appoint him after consultation with the government of the Lithuanian Republic." The Visitator immediately sent a copy of the telegram to the Prime Minister, Dr. Bistras, in Kaunas.

On the same day, June 1st, he arrived at the Port of Cherbourg, where he boarded the ship which took him to New York. In New York, Mr. K. Bizauskas, the Lithuanian Envoy to Washington, who a year ago had been Envoy to the Vatican, awaited him. Also in attendance was the representative of the Cardinal of New York, Msgr. Lavelle, and a group of Lithuanians. That evening, his countrymen from New York and the surrounding area, about 400 people in all, arranged a reception for the guest.

Archbishop Matulaitis left New York to visit the Envoy of Lithuania in Washington. Here, on June 10th, they received the news that Dr. Kazys Grinius had been elected President of Lithuania. He was a colleague from the Marijampolė High School, three years his senior.

Next on his itinerary was Chicago, which he reached by train on June 11th. A group of Lithuanians awaited him at the railroad station. They had come by automobile. He was escorted to the Gate of Dawn Church, a Marian parish, where the Archbishop celebrated Mass and spoke to those assembled. That evening, there was a reception for him in the auditorium of the St. Casimir Sisters. Among those present was the Lithuanian Consul, Mr. P. Žadeikis, and about 400 Lithuanians.

The next day, he paid a visit to Chicago's Cardinal Mundelein and to the Lithuanian Consul, Mr. Žadeikis. On June 13th, he went to Cicero to bless the new church of St. Anthony. He was met by a procession of Lithuanians a mile and a half long lining the streets. He blessed the church, celebrated High Mass and delivered the sermon. There were so many people that all of them could not enter the church and did not hear him preach. The pastor asked them to return at 3:00 p.m. and the Archbishop repeated his sermon and gave Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. At five o'clock in the afternoon, they were waiting for him at the Providence of God Church.

The Eucharistic Congress began on June 16th. He continued to visit the parishes, absenting himself at times from the evening programs of the Congress. In all, he visited nine parishes and the Academy conducted by the Sisters of St. Casimir. At the Congress, he met an old friend from Poland, Bishop Przezdziecki. The latter wrote that at the Eucharistic Congress Archbishop Matulaitis "spoke on the merging of the Orthodox with the Catholic Church. He spoke as usual, calmly and clearly, yet, you felt the warmth of his love in every word he uttered. I spoke to him briefly after the Congress. I saw before me a man oppressed by sufferings and the burden of his duties. I did not know why we felt so sad and said so little to each other" (AJM, 103).

Although Archbishop Matulaitis was absolutely exhausted, he just could not refuse the opporunity to visit the Lithuanian parishes as he had promised. Therefore, he continued with this task. After the Congress, he went to Detroit, Michigan, Pennsylvania (where he remained the longest), and the Atlantic coast.

The visitation of the parishes continued. "From June to August, the Visitator of Lithuania visited 92 Lithuanian churches," according to Rev. Būčys. "These visits were always pleasant. He realized how much pleasure and happiness he brought to the immigrants, although sometimes it was physically difficult for him" (*Pius XI*, 359).

Matulaitis returned to Kaunas at the beginning of September and found a new leftist government in power which wanted nothing to do with the Apostolic Visitator. He turned his attention to other tasks. He reorganized the Catholic Action Center. Then he writes: "I put in order the Benedictine Monastery in Kaunas" (XII, 13), transforming it from a cloistered to an active community. Several times he visited the Casimirite Sisters at Pažaislis, near Kaunas, where a group which had come from America had settled. During these visits he helped them to make certain positive changes. In October, he went to Marijampolė and attended to the affairs of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. There, he accepted the vows of a group of sisters.

Some six months after the founding of the ecclesiastical Province, Matulaitis called another Conference and prepared the agenda. Many items were considered, as can be seen from the notes which were found after his death. One of the items on the agenda was to forbid priests from becoming actively involved in politics as party leaders or ministers of government. Other items concerned the preparation of Conferences for the deaneries, courses for priests, organization of parish committees, catechism classes for children in the schools, religious instructions for youth and adults in the churches, appointment of chaplains for the army, publica-

tion of religious textbooks, and distribution of the wealth of the church.

At the end of the six months, he prepared a report for the Vatican on the functioning of the province and it seemed that his mission in Lithuania was completed. "This evening, I will leave by train for Latvia," he wrote to Reverend Reklaitis, on November 4th. "After I return, I am going to attend to my affairs quickly and then go back to Rome. When I will be able to leave, I do not know. There are still so many important things to be done."

"I feel terribly overworked and would like to return to Rome as soon as possible," he wrote to him again on November 22nd. "But I cannot leave as yet. You see, a government member informed me that perhaps soon they will begin to consider starting negotiations with the Vatican... But will this present government want to negotiate and reach an agreement?... At any rate, I shall leave at the beginning of December since my passport expires then... There is more and more dissatisfaction in Lithuania with the present government. It is sad for Lithuania—all these experiments... and these party quarrels may destroy her."

"I am still unable to leave Lithuania," he wrote to Rev. F. Kulikauskas in Chicago on December 2nd. "But, perhaps I may have the chance to rectify relations between Church and State."

In Rome, the student Marian priests from sev-

eral countries were waiting for him in the modest, newly established Marian College. The German priests who were preparing for mission work in Russia were also anxiously awaiting him. Archbishop Matulaitis, on December 10th, reminded them not to worry because "there were many important things to be done here," but he hoped "to get away soon." On December 13th he wrote: "I am sitting here as if on hot embers. I look forward to the day when I will be able to return. Minister Požėla asks me to wait a while longer. He wants to confer about the Concordat. Up to now, there have been no serious talks about it. I do not expect much to come out of this. It is unlikely that the government would seriously consider these things." Rev. Būčys wrote that the negotiations were delayed and were never seriously undertaken. "Matulaitis would return from these talks utterly exhausted" (Pius XI, 360-61).

On December 17th, there occurred a military coup. "A great change has taken place in Lithuania," Matulaitis wrote to Rev. Reklaitis on December 21st. "The government has changed hands... Perhaps now it will be easier to work with the new members and the Church affairs will be settled. Then I can leave for Rome." Indeed, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Voldemaras, at once offered to begin negotiations for a Concordat.

It was now time for the Christmas holidays. Catholic conventions, also courses for priests took

place. He participated in these and was happy that "Catholics were starting to organize intensively." His lectures at this time are described by Rev. A. Sabaliauskas. "He did not shout or gesticulate, but he spoke powerfully and calmly and you felt that truth poured out of him... In his lectures, there was nothing of himself. Life, as he portrayed it, seemed full of God's light. We felt that a saint was speaking to us" (AJM, 105).

The negotiations for the Concordat lasted a month. During this time, many important problems were resolved. "Just now I am drawing up the Concordat agreement," he mentioned to Father Reklaitis on December 31st. "I am working very intensively. It may take three more weeks." After he had finished the project, on January 15th, he asked the bishops to give their opinion and then he sent it to the Minister A. Voldemaras. The latter answered him in writing that the government accepted the project as the basis for further formal negotiations. Matulaitis then sat down to prepare a report for Cardinal Gasparri.

THE FINAL DRAMATIC WEEK

The report took some time to prepare, for he had to explain and justify individual items in the project. While he was writing, sharp pains developed in his stomach. The work slowed down because of them. Rev. Būčys suggested that he see a

doctor, but Matulaitis refused. He completed the report in three days and gave it to Rev. Būčys to mail it to Rome. Then he went to bed.

"On Thursday night the pain became unbearable and the Archbishop agreed that a doctor should be called. Dr. Vl. Kairiūkštis arrived at about one o'clock during the night and diagnosed the illness as a ruptured appendix. A hurried call went out to Prof. Hagentorn, the surgeon. Rev. J. Vailokaitis provided his automobile to pick up Hagentorn, but the chauffer was arrested by the police because the country was still in the state of emergency" (Pius VI, 361). Some time passed before the chauffer was released. Finally, he did get Prof. Hagentorn to the patient. The doctor was reluctant to make a decision without further consultation. They tried to get a third doctor, Dr. Žemgulis, but could not reach him. Then Hagentorn ordered the patient to be carried by stretcher to his Clinic and only at ten o'clock in the morning did he perform the operation.

The patient began to feel better. No one was allowed to visit him except a Marian priest who brought him Holy Communion. Three nurses, taking shifts, cared for him. To one of them, Juozapa, Matulaitis spoke in the morning that he still had a great amount of work to do. But that evening he said:

"It is enough, I am ready for eternity."

That evening two priests, Rev. Vailokaitis and

Rev. dr. Česaitis, a Marian, came to visit him. The doctor warned them that the patient was very weak.

The nurse repeated to them Archbishop Matulaitis' last sentence. Rev. Česaitis stayed all night to keep watch. In the morning, he brought him Holy Communion. The Archbishop expressed his desire to receive it as *Viaticum*. The doctor reported to Rev. Česaitis about the patient:

"His pulse is alarming. Since ten o'clock this morning, it has been getting weaker."

The nurses remained on duty all the time. The patient would open his eyes, thank them and ask them not to tire themselves, but to go and get some rest. He also told Rev. Česaitis to go home, but he remained in the hallway. Whenever Česaitis looked into the room, he heard the rapid breathing of the patient and sometimes a moan. At about one o'clock during the night, the doctor told Rev. Česaitis that the patient more than likely would not last until dawn. Česaitis, who was a Marian, went to the bed and knelt down.

"Your Excellency, please bless the Congregation."

The patient put his hands over Česaitis' head, made the sign of the cross on his forehead and said: "Close ranks and sacrifice yourselves! Close ranks and sacrifice yourselves!"

He raised his hand, blessed him and lowered it to his face. His fingers gently touched Rev. Če-

saitis' cheek, as if giving the sacrament of confirmation.

"Excellency, perhaps I can give you the last rites?"

"Good. This morning I received *Viaticum.* Anoint me!"

When the anointing was concluded, Archbishop Matulaitis said:

"Now you can go home and rest!"

Česaitis stepped back, but did not leave the room. The patient began to recite the psalms. Then he folded his hands and extended them in a semicircle, as if he were blessing someone. For a moment it seemed that his strength was gone and he lay still and perhaps dozed off. Unconsciously, he pushed the bedcovers away and occasionally moved restlessly.

The nurse came in and sat down by the bed. He opened his eyes and asked:

"What is your name?"

"Juozapa."

"Kneel and repeat after me." The nurse knelt. The Archbishop placed his hands over her head and said:

"I, Juozapa, servant of the Lord, place into your hands, Almighty God, these three simple vows for an indefinite period of time."

Juozapa repeated each word, not realizing that these were religious vows. Rev. Česaitis who was standing in the corridor, heard these words of the

Archbishop. He had spoken them so clearly and so loudly that he thought that Matulaitis' health was improving.

"At two and three o'clock in the morning his pulse was very faint. At three-thirty the patient became very still. His breathing was very weak. The three nurses, the doctor and I were with the patient," writes Rev. Česaitis. "We all knelt down... The Archbishop died at 3:45 a.m. very quietly and with a smile on his face" (AJM, 52).

The date was January 27, 1927. The news was proclaimed by the simultaneous tolling of the Kaunas church bells. A telegram brought the news to the Apostolic See.

"C'est un désastre (It is a disaster!)" Cardinal Gasparri pronounced.

"Perhaps Matulaitis would be alive today if he would have taken to bed as soon as he felt ill," writes Rev. Būčys, "But he wanted to complete his task first." He regarded this as being much more important than his life. "According to the theologians, this is considered to be the highest heroic virtue" (Pius XI, 362)

* * *

Matulaitis' brother, Andrius, attended the funeral. He was the one who had helped him with his high school studies. Present also were a group of other close relatives. His coffin was carried by the students. They carried it on their shoulders from the clinic to the Marian chapel, then to the Cathe-

dral and to his final resting place in the Cathedral crypt. "It was only right that the youth who had undertaken to *"renew all in Christ"* in Lithuania, should perform this act of courtesy" (AJM 53). For the funeral services in the basilica, there had gathered school children and students, the government and parliament, the military and diplomatic corps, representatives of the Latvians and the White Russians, priests and seminarians, the Chapter and bishops, the workers of Kaunas, and the people who lived in the area. "The funeral," according to Rev. M. Vaitkus, "was tremendously sorrowful and impressive... All of Lithuania mourned, having lost one of her greatest sons" (*Four Shepherds*, 1960, 48) "Even today, it is still difficult to say how much Lithuania and the Catholic Church lost by the death of Archbishop Jurgis. Such men are given us only by the special grace of divine Providence," wrote a diplomat, Eduardas Turauskas (AJM, 63).

Seven years passed. Bishop Matulaitis was ready to return to his birthplace, to the church of Marijampolė. He was escorted from Kaunas by a huge crowd of people and by the priests and bishops of Lithuania. Among the latter was one whom Matulaitis had known well. It was no other than his colleague and friend, Bishop Henry Przezdziecki from Poland.

Once the remains were transferred to Marijampolė, the Bishop of Vilkaviškis approved a

prayer to the Holy Trinity for Matulaitis' beatification. The first formal step of the process of beatification was begun in Rome, in 1953. In 1959, he was given the title of Servant of God. In 1971, the case went to the higher papal court.

A MAN WITH A MISSION

When we look at photographs of Bishop Matulaitis reflecting great innter peace, we may be inclined to think that he was destined to remain in one spot, absorbed in his work, living out his life peacefully and quietly. But in reality, he was brimming over with an inner urgency, an impatience to act.

As we read his writings and recall his manner of speaking, we get the impression that he was a very unassuming person, easily accessible to all, expressing his ideas simply and directly. But the more we read and reflect upon what he has written, we discover that his simplicity contains great wisdom, a comprehension of people and their affairs, a profound insight into current events. Several of his contemporaries have remarked that Bishop Matulaitis possessed extraordinary talents, that he was brilliant. The two higher institutions of learning

which he attended attest to this: the Academy of St. Petersburg which granted him the highest honors for his master's thesis and the University of Fribourg, where he defended his doctoral dissertation.

Not only his friends, but also the enemies of his Vilnius days acknowledge that Bishop Matulaitis possessed an unusual ability of self-control and forgave injuries readily. He was most tactful and expressed fatherly concern toward everyone without exception. No one regarded him as a saint at that time, yet already he radiated something that was close to perfection.

Three characteristics colored his personality—his brilliant mind, his desire for action and his holiness. They form an attractive and harmonious whole which captures our attention and admiration especially today.

Matulaitis' life spanned the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth. During this period, secularism flourished in the West, and a Catholic intellectual and social revival was beginning; in the East, in Russia, despotism was rampant and communism was emerging. Matulaitis was familiar both with the West and the East. His concern was directed toward the needs of his country and of the Church. He was *a man with a mission,* a mission that was important for his own time and is relevant for ours as well. This mission of his developed in three distinct phases.

As a priest, Matulaitis had the opportunity to test the possibilities of various fields of work. He was a Seminary professor, the vice-rector of a theological Academy, a hospital chaplain, and a high school teacher. But in none of these did he find his own special mission. His education prepared him to teach apologetics and dogmatic theology, but this did not appeal to him. His mission actually took shape in a field where he had comparatively little training beforehand—this was the field of sociology and social action. He undertook this work when he seemed least capable of accomplishing anything at all. After successfully avoiding the amputation of his leg and having improved his health, he was teaching at a girls' high school. It was at this time that he quietly began to organize a group of city workers, which became a large organization with a membership of 50,000. This endeavor aroused something of a furor. He was labeled an enemy of the Church, a liberal and a socialist.

But Matulaitis was not dismayed by this reaction. On the contrary, having experienced this baptism by fire, he continued with his work. He began to organize sociology and social action workshops in Warsaw, Poland, and later in Kaunas, Lithuania. It was totally unexpected at that time, in 1907, that he would be invited to the St. Petersburg Academy to teach sociology which, until then, had not been taught anywhere in Russia. He taught not only

theoretical sociology but prepared future priests in a practical way, inspiring them to engage in positive social action. From this group of students, Lithuania obtained many social activists. During his second year of studies, V. Jurgutis, inspired by Matulaitis' lectures, began to gather together a group of students from whom would spread the movement "to renew all in Christ" (the organization "Ateitis").

Matulaitis was not content by far with the teaching of sociology and organizing the workers and the poor. The idea began to crystalize in his mind that it was necessary to renew all of society with the spirit of Christ (Diary, 31). But who would undertake such a task if there were no leaders, no core groups or centers? Who would train these leaders and how?

He resolved to form groups where the Christian life was lived fully and intensively—religious communities, around which the laity could gather, both men and women (ibid, 16,28). "In our times and considering the condition in which the Church finds herself, ordinary workers, mere hired hands are not enough, we need apostles" (107). "It is better to have fewer workers, but really dedicated and devoted ones who have given up everything and are filled with the Spirit" (32, 106).

Such should be the apostolic spirit of this select group. They should be "zealous and courageous, unhesitating, fearless and well-organized...

having initiative and discipline" (27-28). They should be a positive "force . . . not merely a group that defends itself (45), for it is not enough to defend oneself. It is necessary to take the offensive" (10). We must "go. . . wherever there is the greatest ungodliness, immorality, loss of faith, turning away from the Church" (22). We must "enter wherever we possibly can. . . : if they throw you out through one door, return by another, even by a back door. . . so that the Spirit of Christ may be brought to all" (22-23).

THE CHARISMATIC PHASE

Such was his new vocation and resolve, born about 1908 while he was teaching sociology in the St. Petersburg Academy. He felt that it was not enough for him to remain a dust-rag in the Church (Matulaitis used to refer to himself in this way) or even to plug up a convenient hole in the honorable hierarchy. He decided to leave the Academy, to resign his professorship and devote himself totally to this new task. It became an all-absorbing idea, a truly Christ-like mission. "The goal of Christ's life must become my goal, if I truly wish to walk in the footsteps of the saints. . . What did Christ desire? To build the Kingdom of God on earth, that is, our holy Church. How did he strive to do this? By total self-renunciation. What follows, then? The necessity of our complete dedica-

tion and devotion to the Church" (Diary, 10). From this there developed in Matulaitis a new, Christ-centered and dynamic drive: "To bring Christ everywhere, to renew and restore all things in Christ, to undertake all for Christ, to draw all toward Christ" (ibid, 10-11).

In this resolve of his, there arose for the first time a noteworthy implication: "... if I truly wish to walk in the footsteps of the saints..." This meant the heroic way of perfection. And immmediately he found himself being tested by fire.

> "It is truly amazing. While I was not yet determined to renounce everything and follow Christ completely, people did not notice me, nor did anyone offer me prestigious positions. ... But as soon as I had made the first step to follow Christ, they immediately began to offer me high and influential posts—that of rector, then canon. Without my knowledge they made me vice-rector of the Academy and began to suggest that soon I would become suffragan bishop... Even the government had calmed down concerning Catholic activities and organizations. But as soon as we began to implement our plan, a wave of persecutions and searches started. They were looking for secret organizations" (81). Because of these events "I had to endure much, to suffer greatly and to re-think many things" (80; cf. 105-106).

Matulaitis had to remain a teacher and administrator at the Academy of St. Petersburg until 1911. However, in 1909 he secretly made his religious vows and began to restore the dying Marian Congregation. At that time, he entered the most intensive and dynamic period of his spiritual development and activity, which continued throughout the last twenty years of his life.

His call to the priesthood came to him in his early adolescent years, in his youth. But, having reached the age of 37, he discovered his true monastic vocation. His mission was not just to become a religious for himself alone, but to restore religious life in Lithuania, for it had been almost completely destroyed by the Russian regime. This was the first part of his task. The second was to adapt religious life to the modern era to meet the social demands of the times and to direct its apostolic activities toward an integrated whole in Christ, the source of all Christian renewal.

This mission can be called charismatic because its goal was to bring new life to a specific sector of society, making it a more flexible instrument to serve the people and the Church—the larger communities. Within twenty years, he promoted the growth of the Marians in Lithuania, Poland, White Russia, Latvia, and the United States of America. He founded religious communities for women in Lithuania (The Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary) and in White

Russia. He also helped to renovate fifteen other religious communities by apdating their Constitutions and regulations.

Matulaitis devoted an extraordinary amount of time and energy toward replenishing the ranks of the Church's most dedicated workers so that they would be better prepared for the task ahead of them. But what happened to the social action which he had begun so successfully? And what about his plans to organize a lay apostolate? What of his concerns for his own country, Lithuania?

HIS SACRIFICE FOR LITHUANIA

"In the first place," he wrote, "I serve the Church as her priest. But I believe that I will not wrong Lithuania, if the Lord blesses the task I have undertaken... My conscience tells me that I am on the right path" (Diary, 128). Very reluctantly, not wanting to cut short his work of re-establishing religious communities, he made the ultimate sacrifice for the good of Lithuania. He agreed, upon the request of the Council of Lithuania, to undertake the duties of Bishop of Vilnius, the capital city, should Rome approve and appoint him to this post. He was appointed. Soon afterward, the Polish army took over the capital and a greater part of the diocese of Vilnius came under the control of the Poles. Matulaitis found himself cut off from Lithuania and from his religious communities. The Bishop's

throne was scorched by the raging fire of partisan politics, which fanned nationalistic animosities directed against him as a Lithuanian, completely disregarding his impartial and fatherly concern for all. This lasted for seven years until, at last, he decided to resign.

These years in Vilnius sapped much of his physical and psychological stamina and stamped him with the scars of martyrdom, yet they did not break him. On the contrary, this experience served to purify his soul. In 1925 Matulaitis returned *via* Rome, where Pope Pius XI elevated him to the rank of titular Archbishop and entrusted him with a new task—that of Apostolic Visitator to Lithuania. Now, for the first time since the reign of King Mindaugas in the thirteenth century, an independent ecclesiastical province was to be established in Lithuania and a Concordat prepared with the Vatican.

He accomplished the first part of his task in less than a year, selecting four new bishops and an archbishop who were then approved by Rome. Then he visited many of the Lithuanian parishes in the United States, and again returned to his work. While preparing the Concordat, he suffered an attack of appendicitis, but did not hurry to see a doctor. The delay cost him his life. J. Matulaitis died on January 27, 1927. He went out like a candle, as he had so often prayed: "Grant me, o Lord, to be consumed like a candle upon your altar from

the heat of work and the fire of love for You and Your Church" (80).

It was after he had died that his contemporaries and former students witnessed to the fact that we had lost a great moral leader and a greater Lithuanian than anyone had realized. He had led a heroic life and radiated holiness. Then it became clear that, without Bishop Matulaitis' advice, without his suggestions and recommendations, it would have been very difficult to promote so many Catholic organizations, to say nothing of the Catholic press and other courageous undertakings which led the way toward reform and renewal. Only then did it become obvious that neither the social dimension of Matulaitis' mission, nor his concern for the needs of Lithuania, had disappeared from view.

THE ECUMENICAL PHASE

Due to his death, Matulaitis' mission remained unfinished. He was not able to complete his plans for the renovation of religious communities so that they would be truly effective organizations of high caliber. Nor could he finish renewing the parishes and Catholic organizations and harmonizing their activities so that all things would be restored in Christ. However, the work which he began, inspired and directed was equally relevant to the present and the future. Matulaitis has something to say to the culture of the present day.

Matulaitis, who was afflicted with a serious illness from the age of eleven, had learned how to ease physical pain by patience and spiritual hurt by using it to find deeper meaning in life. He was inclined to treat social illnesses with just reforms and by bringing back a new spirit, the spirit of God, into society. He sought the solution to national antipathies by first ridding himself of all predjudice toward the Jews, Russians, and Poles whom he had disliked in his youth (cf. Diary, 112). He wanted to be everything to everyone, to help all who were in need, but he felt closest to his own fellow countrymen. Matulaitis was a splendid example of how it is possible to integrate human and Christian values in life and how to direct everything toward the highest goal and value—God.

In his personal life, Matulaitis combined action with contemplation. In social life, he tried to integrate justice, love, understanding, respect and self-sacrifice. This was the harmony that he saw in the example of Christ himself. Matulaitis' own spiritual development, which took place under the influence of both East and West, can serve as an example of how the two can be integrated in one man.

The wide-spread disunity of the Church was of great concern to Matulaitis and he was very much interested in the possibility of reconciliation. He gave the West his dissertation, "The Russian Doctrine of Original Justice," and for the East

he provided a dynamic example of personal responsibility, working for a better world according to the example of Christ.

Matulaitis would have had much to say about bringing together the clergy and laity to work on the solutions to national and religious problems of today. It was Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis who inspired Pope Pius XI to proclaim the apostolate of the laity. He encouraged his students at the Academy to take a step which seemed radical and unprecedented. In Lithuania, as in many other countries, the priests had been the leaders, but now they gave up this role and instead prepared the laity to assume positions of leadership, while they helped out wherever they could. Matulaitis was a real pioneer in this respect.

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Today, people are no longer patient or willing to wait. They need help. They are desperately searching for the meaning of life, for values to live by, and especially for love. One mother, when asked how she divided up her love among her ten children, replied: "I do not divide it, I *increase* it!"

Matulaitis himself was an example of how love can be increased and directed toward its inexhaustable source—God Himself.

Matulaitis has shown us that, by seeking personal sanctity and the sanctification of the communities in which we live, we can free ourselves

from futility. These inspiring words are found in his *Diary*:

Perfect yourself by serving others (11).

Live consciously the supernatural life! (11)

Overcome evil with goodness
and stubborness with love (124).

Keep your inner tranquillity
and meet the future with courage—
trust in God's Providence (21).

Let us go boldly and courageously
along the path which God has shown us,
wherever the spirit leads...
The spirit cannot be bound by chains,
neither can prison or exile restrain it (24-25).

THE PERSONALITY OF A LEADER

The bishops of Vilnius were always considered to be among the foremost leaders of Lithuania, performing an important role in her history. Thus, the Council of Lithuania took pains to see that this position be occupied by a prominent clergyman who was a good Lithuanian as well. For this purpose they made frequent appeals to the Vatican representatives until they found an apparently acceptable candidate in the person of Rev. Jurgis Matulaitis.

There was no doubt that he was a prominent clergyman. However, the Council was not sure if he would prove to be a good Lithuanian concerned about the needs of his country, since he had spent a number of years in Poland.

A RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY AND LEADER

That Bishop Matulaitis had been an outstanding leader was acknowledged only after his death. In the words of President Smetona, "he had a gift for organization. His concern for the effective reorganization of our community life was a guiding idea in Archbishop Jurgis' life" (AJM, 65). One Lithuanian publication wrote that "Matulaitis was indeed a rare personality" (Lietuvių tautos valia, 1927.II.1) and another said that "Archbishop Jurgis was the one person who foresaw the dangers which lay ahead for Lithuania and did much to combat them... He was acknowledged by all to be an indisputable authority, not so much because of his position, but because of his personal qualities" (Lietuva, 1927.II.2).

What were these personal qualities which made Matulaitis a recognized authority and leader? Professor I. Tamošaitis, a former student of his at the St. Petersburg Academy, wrote: "It was his ability to understand and sympathize with everyone, along with a brilliant mind and strength of will radiating holiness that made Bishop Matulaitis a great and balanced personality" (AJM, 7). On the day of his death, the Catholic daily *Rytas* spoke of him thus: "Archbishop Jurgis' personality and his extraordinarily noble and holy life, his strength of will, his unusual gentleness and outstanding intellect impressed not only his friends, but also those of opposing views" (1927.I.27). Five years after his

death, the magazine *Naujoji Romuva* claimed that Matulaitis had achieved the kind of integration which the philosopher Šalkauskis later recommended to the whole nation: "When we examine the personality of Bishop Matulaitis more closely, we can see that in him were crystalized the best qualities of the cultures of the East and of the West. It can be stated without a doubt that, in his personality, the synthesis of both cultures was evident, and yet he preserved his Lithuanian character and the noblest elements of the heritage of his forefathers" (1931, N 18).

How did this "talented social organizer and reformer," to use the words of Tumas-Vaižgantas, mature and develop? One thing is clear—he matured not only in his native country of Lithuania. He left it quite young and spent time in Poland, Russia and Switzerland. He began his education in Lithuania, but continued it in these three countries where he also worked, until, finally, he became Bishop of Vilnius. Wherever he happened to be, he remained close to Lithuania and concerned about her needs. He stayed in the mainstream of Lithuanian life, but he was ready to learn from others and thus achieved that remarkable synthesis in his life and work.

As a mature sociologist, though still quite young as a leader, he suddenly appeared in Warsaw. Here his achievements in the field of social action resulted in an invitation to teach sociology

at the Academy of St. Petersburg. He taught, as Mečislovas Reinys attests, not only theoretical but also applied sociology. He formed the views of his students on social questions, encouraged them to enter the field of social action and taught them practical methods. Professor Pranas Būčys asserts that Bishop Matulaitis kept in close touch with all the Lithuanian Catholic organizations: he encouraged their efforts, supported their leaders and maintained close ties with them. He was, in some way, involved in all the various Catholic Action groups. In some instances, he influenced them directly; in others, he acted as moderator and advisor. Mykolas Krupavičius states that such a radical step as the Lithuanian land reform project would not have been possible without Matulaitis' approval, encouragement and advice (AJM, 158-160). The newspaper *Rytas* acknowledged that "He gave direction to the Christian Democrats and verified their program" (1927, N 22). Matulaitis also supported and extended the field of activity of the Catholic Action Center.

The scope of Matulaitis' interests, experience and influence is truly amazing. It extended from the field of politics, in which he was never directly involved, to religious life in which he actively participated by reorganizing and renewing religious communities. His influence was felt in all the affairs of Lithuania and also in those of the Lithuanian-Americans, whom he had personally visited

and encouraged, especially through the Marians in the United States.

This wide circle of interest and activity did not allow him to remain long in any one place. For four years he was professor at the St. Petersburg Academy, then suddenly, to the dismay of all, he resigned. After seven years as Bishop of Vilnius, he withdrew by his own decision. It seemed that he experienced a new urgency, a need to go on to something else. He was gathering his energy for something greater and more important or, perhaps, he felt that he ought to direct that energy toward new undertakings as they evolved amidst the changing circumstances. Was this not the urgency of a leader, the impatience of a man directing the moral development of an entire nation?

INNER DYNAMISM AND OUTWARD CALM

Matulaitis' outward appearance suggested a phlegmatic temperament, whereas his calm face with its deep-set eyes seemed to be that of a mystic.

The mobility of Matulaitis was greatly hampered by the heavy brace which he wore on his leg for many years, since he was afflicted with tuberculosis of the bone. This brace chained him like a prisoner. It prevented him from directing and enacting everything himself. He was also closely watched by Russian spies. Thus, Matulaitis often worked through others.

Bishop Matulaitis had the opportunity to restore the religious communities which, in turn, founded new schools, printeries and libraries. (Due to Matulaitis' efforts, the Marian library became the largest one after that of the University of Kaunas). In his view, religious communities should not simply be secluded institutions for the pursuit of perfection, but centers for various kinds of social and cultural activity. It was with this view in mind that he renovated what was still left of the religious communities in Lithuania and in Poland and re-edited their Constitutions according to the new principles. When he founded a new Congregation —The Sisters of the Immaculate Conception—he was more at liberty to furnish it with a new program. This proved to be so far advanced, modern and flexible, that, even after 60 years, no major changes were needed. During this same period, the Constitutions of many other congregations had to be up-dated.

The direction which he wanted the Marian Congregation and the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception to take was characteristic of his entire spiritual thrust. Many other organizations which were established in Lithuania at that time were also influenced by it. In his "Guiding Thought and Spirit," prepared for these two religious communities, Matulaitis expressed some of his main ideas. He emphasized the need for an integration of values. Matulaitis stressed the need to maintain sta-

bility of principle balanced with flexibility of method, spiritual maturity and outward activity (including involvement in community affairs), and careful selection of persons to be trained for various fields of action with due consideration of their talents and inclinations. He drew attention to the need for authority, but encouraged proper respect for individual freedom. External regulations, even in religious communities, he regarded as meaningless unless there was harmony between these rules and the individual's freedom. Even organized social activity, which he valued highly and encouraged in every way, would not be well-balanced if it overlooked individual initiative in its apostolic endeavors. In his words, individual effort was to be complemented by drawing others into action as well.

MATULAITIS IN AN ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE

Bishop Matulaitis often repeated the motto: "Let us think and feel with the Church." This may be taken to refer to the above-mentioned integration of Christian values. It means that we must be aware of the Church's mission at the present time and in these circumstances without losing sight of that basic harmony. This was also characteristic of Matulaitis' social doctrine of working for the people taking on the most urgent tasks regardless of difficulties, and going where the need is greatest

—especially where others are reluctant to venture because of the hardships involved. He recommended that, when involved in social action among the working classes or in society in general, they not be afraid of bold reforms. He also suggested that they be prepared to dispense with priestly and religious garb if this would help reach people more effectively. At that time this was a radical idea which was more widely acclaimed only after Vatican II.

Matulaitis was a person of great talent, but also simple and unassuming, expressing great tolerance and respect toward all. President Smetona recalls his words, spoken in Vilnius to the representatives of various nations and of various convictions: "If we take off our hat when passing a cross in order to show respect to a symbol of Christ who died out of love for all men, then all the more should we bow in respect to every person, Catholic or non-Catholic, for each is imbued with the same spirit of God" (AJM, 66).

Matulaitis was a bold reformer, a revolutionary when it was a question of changing external social conditions. But it is most interesting that a person of such talent and ambition (in the best sense of the word) should so completely disregard his own career, his own health and energy. He dedicated himself to the needs of his time, to the mission of the Church. With great foresight he strove to lead his nation out of spiritual dangers.

The integration of values which Bishop Matulaitis used as the foundation of many Christian movements and organizations, as well of the religious communities which he founded or renovated, shows not only his deep understanding of Christianity, but also his response to the need for healing the ills of the times. The revolutionary currents which Lithuania felt in the neighboring countries were fragmenting values to the utmost extremes. Bishop Matulaitis' response to this was both active and positive as he strove to maintain equilibrium in his own small nation.

His motto, "to think and to feel with the Church" has become vital for our own time. It means not only to be aware, to "feel" our responsibilities, but also to weigh them carefully to see if we are in agreement with the most profound thought of the Church. Matulaitis' writings show how sensitive he was in this respect. Boldly progressive, surpassing others in his choice of forms and methods, he retained a deep insight into the essence of holiness.

Another rallying cry of his, "For Church and Country" is certainly relevant for us today. Both Lithuania herself and those who live in the free world are threatened with the disintegration of religious and national values. It seems that Matulaitis lived at least fifty years ahead of his time, since he predicted many of our modern problems and the means to overcome them.

* * *

Quiet, simple and modest, at first glance Matulaitis did not appear to be a leader. Deeply spiritual, intelligent and observant, he seemed destined to be a scholar and an educator. His leadership qualities emerged out of his concern for the Church and for his country in a troubled era. He undertook the task of inaugurating a spiritual and moral renewal, using his experience in the field of social action to achieve this goal. He began his work with the education of young clergymen and extended it to the laity whom he prepared to assume leadership roles and to dedicate their whole lives to these two realities—Church and Country.

A month before his death, he had spoken to the youth of Lithuania who had gathered in Kaunas from all parts of the country: "To love God and His Church, to love your neighbor and your country, let this be your loving occupation every day, the wings on which you ascend to virtue... We have all kinds of well-educated people—engineers, lawyers, politicians, naturalists,—but we need people of examplary moral life, holy people, those who seek perfection. Without God, there is no question of man's spiritual transformation... It is only in the radiant light of this lofty ideal that heroes are born. angels in human form, Christian supermen..." And he added: "Great achievements are impossible without sacrifice and suffering, without dedication and patience, without love. Let us re-

member our most precious example—Christ himself... He was the first to sacrifice himself for this ideal. He was consumed by its flames on the hill of Calvary" (AJM, 257-59). In these words Matulaitis also revealed himself.

A RADIANT PEACE

The most striking characteristic of Bishop Matulaitis' personality was his peacefulness. While only a few people had as yet recognized his sanctity, many noticed the peace which radiated from his face, his eyes. To some it may have seemed that he possessed a wonderfully balanced temperament, that he was by nature calm, gentle and mild. Those who knew the many difficulties and sufferings he had undergone in his youth and later on in life may have thought that these experiences had made him less sensitive to the various trials of life. Still others probably conjectured that this young priest, immersed in his studies and fascinated by the ideal of monastic life, later consecrated bishop, could not have had the opportunity to know life and people. He had never been disappointed or hurt by any-

one. However, it would certainly be naive to think that Matulaitis' peace was merely due to his temperament or was the result of his misconceptions about life or, again, was the natural cleansing effect of the sufferings he had borne.

TO KNOW PEOPLE AND TO LOVE THEM

He observed life in an open and realistic manner and, thus, understood it as it was. "The world is not paradise, people are not angels and it is impossible to live on earth without a cross," he once wrote to a brother Marian. Then he added: "Be concerned, my Brother, to have peace in your heart... If you can, bring peace to the hearts of others and encourage them to maintain it... Peace must be a precious gift indeed, if Christ wanted his apostles to have it so abundantly" (Diary, 114-25).

He knew what can be expected from people, even from those involved in the most sacred undertakings. "I once thought," he says, "that people only tried to stop others when they saw them climbing higher, seeking better positions. But now I am convinced that people are more angered and irritated by those whom they see trying to follow a little more closely in the footsteps of Christ" (p. 125). He was dismayed to observe "how full of malice they were, how intolerant toward one another" (ibid).

Knowing people, especially this darker side of

them, is the greatest hindrance to our peace. Matulaitis had experienced this in his childhood. As a priest he had the painful experience that those who consecrated him later often turned away and left him alone in his suffering.

His brother priests had often regarded him with suspicion and had even reported him to his superiors. He writes of this: "When I was first informed by a good priest that I was being looked upon as an atheist by the Curia of Warsaw and that I would not receive its approval, I was very hurt. I actually fell ill and did not feel myself for about two weeks." He adds: "Only on holy cards does the cross appear beautiful, decorated with flowers. The real crosses which we experience in life are always difficult to bear" (107).

If a grown person smiles at everyone, he will be thought abnormal or a saint. Matulaitis' peace and his smile could not have been that of a naive child or of a madman but that of a saint who had transformed his knowledge of people by extraordinary love. In all this he was guided by the example which Christ gave us. "Our Lord Jesus Christ was always at peace,"—writes Jurgis Matulaitis. "No matter how many insults people heaped upon him, he never stopped loving and serving them. He died for them, even though he knew their ingratitude and unworthiness... Of all people, only the Lord Jesus perfectly united his understanding of people with his love for them.

He knew them in their own depths, he saw their dark side and he experienced their great ingratitude, yet he never stopped loving them... We usually do the opposite. When we get to know a good person more intimately and see his weaknesses, our love begins to grow cold. And what of those people who injure and hurt us! We are still so very far from having the true spirit of Christ, my Brother" (124).

This is one of the most penetrating and insightful of Matulaitis' observations: that it is not enough to know people, we must love them. And the more we get to know them, the more we must develop our love for them by imitating the love of Christ himself. Love is the source from which peace flows.

TO LOVE AND TO FORGIVE

Although Matulaitis does not say any more about the peace of Christ, we know of it from the Gospels. Christ is calm and tranquil when being tried by Caiphas, then by Pilate. Showing no outward reaction, he quietly endures the spittings and buffetings, the angry accusations and the lies. The mystery of Christ's peace reveals itself in his words: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Love cannot be unforgiving. The degree of forgiveness depends on the degree of love.

Love is a great virtue, the greatest of them all

as a matter of fact. God requires us to possess it and Christ exemplified it for us in his life. To enhance this virtue from which peace flows, other sustaining virtues are necessary. Matulaitis indicates some natural and practical methods of acquiring them. He says: "One must see and yet not see, hear and yet not hear. One must learn not to be affected by malice and evil, not to become overly anxious because of them" (125).

In the sentences that follow, he reveals how sensitive he was himself: "It is never pleasant to hear talk against your beloved people or your nation... Formerly I used to get quite upset on hearing such talk, but now it has very little impact on me. If I hear it, I simply ignore it. I console myself with the fact that such talk will not make us any worse or any better than we are. Let them say what they will. Let us rather concern ourselves with striving to improve. It is not worthwhile to distress ourselves about this kind of talk" (124).

Matulaitis emphasizes the futility of such anxiety, which can actually be harmful to us. "If we allow the acid of hatred to take over in our hearts, it will do more damage to ourselves than to those who wish to harm us. It will eventually eat our hearts out" (125).

TO KNOW OURSELVES AND TO TRUST IN GOD

If certain relationships with people can be a great source of uneasiness for us, another such

source is our relationship with ourselves. Internal obstacles such as doubts and temptations have a tendency to grow within us. Sometimes we experience interior darkness and we see everything as if through a mist. At times we seem to be making progress, advancing forward and suddenly we fall into an abyss. Our own imperfections give rise to anxieties, worries and grief. The greater the imperfections of which we are aware, the greater often is our lack of peace. However, there is a solution to this.

Just as we need to show great love in our relationships with people, so also do we need great confidence in God in our relationship with ourselves. Matulaitis wrote to a certain nun: "You should never become despondent about your imperfections and weaknesses. The weaker you feel, the more you must trust in God. He is our strength and our salvation." Again, Matulaitis reminds us to have a healthy attitude: "... there is always a gap between the ideal and our actual lives... The greatest saints felt themselves to be weak and sinful, often lamenting and bemoaning the fact... St. Paul himself complained that temptations constantly afflicted him... Strive earnestly to become more perfect and to make progress. Do not be so anxious to see how far you still have to go. God rewards us for every effort and for our good will. When you become aware of your weaknesses and imperfections, humble yourself before God and he, seeing

your humble heart, will not turn you away. The weaker we feel, the more we must trust in God" (123). In another place he writes: "Perfection demands that we recognize our imperfections and bear them patiently in order to be able to struggle against them more perseveringly" (99).

Confidence in God can be compared to an anchor which prevents a boat from overturning in a storm. When we have something to steady us and we know who it is that sustains us, we cannot feel that we are alone or as if we had no God.

Matulaitis expressed this thought quite often: "Once again I looked more deeply into my life... Lord, what weakness! So many imperfections and mistakes everywhere. I would be overcome with despair if I were not so very confident in your mercy... This month my imagination and my thoughts afflicted me. I did not exercise enough control over them. So many times, some urgent matter took hold of me and distracted my attention, carrying me about in all directions so that I could not do my work. And even if I did continue my work, there was little order in it."

After a retreat he writes: "I am aware, O Lord, of how your abundant graces, flowing like a swift stream, constantly cleanse and wash from my soul the dust of its imperfections and the dirt of its transgressions. I thank you for this, most merciful God!" (84).

TO DO GOOD AND REMAIN CALM

There is another source of unrest in addition to that which comes from personal relationship and the knowledge of our own shortcomings, namely our various undertakings, duties and projects. Sometimes there are so many of them that our energy is drained and our spirit grows weary. The work itself is tiring and so is the planning which it requires. Morover, the worry about all the tasks still waiting to be done drains you completely.

Our tasks are quite often interrupted by various obstacles which can only be overcome with great physical and spiritual effort. Fortunate are those who can work at a normal pace, systematically and persistently. They are able to organize their work, to plan it properly and, thus, to retain their tranquility. Let us look at Matulaitis in this respect. He was burdened with an immense number of things to do and this is how he approached the problem: "Only God knows whether anything will come of my wretched and difficult labor, for it is God who gives the increase. Actually, I have no time for dreaming, although people think of my tasks as so many empty dreams. I must work diligently from morning till night. Often I do not even have time to go out for a walk... But even if nothing comes of my hard work and effort, still I think that God will accept and reward my good will because, after all, this should be our greatest concern... I have never desired wealth, empty hon-

ors or any kind of advancement, and now I value them even less, for my only concern is to please God and to do good for the Church and for the people" (128).

Four years after the re-establishment of the Marian Congregation, he went abroad and wrote: "I worked hard and endured many hardships as usual. But that does not distress me. I have dedicated myself to Christ who himself worked hard and bore many difficulties until he walked the way of the cross. I am resolved to walk in his footsteps for as long as I am able and have the energy to do so. What will come of my work, only God knows. Therefore, I entrust all to him" (117).

Having renewed one religious community and founded another, Matulaitis realized that people would come asking to enter so that they could have a quiet and peaceful life. Many people believe that the monastery or convent is a place of sweet tranquillity and peace which the world cannot give. They understand this peace as being simply a secure way of life, work that is not overly taxing, frequent walks in the fresh air along the beautiful paths with rosary in hand, birds singing in the trees and the sun smiling benevolently. On this matter he wrote to a future nun, Miss M. Ruškytė: "A true religious must desire not a quiet existence, but an opportunity for work and self-sacrifice—for God and his people" (99).

* * *

"I remember various times, beginning with Fribourg where we spent many years together, when Providence would bring us into contact with one another," writes the Dominican J. Woronecki, professor at the University of Lublin, Poland, "and, as usual, I was at once struck by the spirit of peace which radiated from Matulaitis' eyes and was so characteristic of his personality. In him I found great spiritual harmony, along with a deep wisdom, sincere love for all and great goodness and kindness. It was evident that his soul was inseparably united with Christ... He spoke to me very calmly about his work (their last meeting was in Chicago, on June 21, 1926, Y.), explaining his position with great nobility and expressing no bitterness toward his enemies... He will remain in my heart and in my memory as the perfect example of the ideal priest of Christ" (AJM, 189).